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THREE YEARS' TEACHING IN BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL

BY W. H. CARNEGIE, M.A.
(RECTOR AND CANON OF BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL)

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PREFACE

No "New Theology" is propounded in the following pages. Their main contention is that the Old Theology of the Catholic Church can meet fully the needs of earnest and intelligent men who are trying to bring their mental and moral activities into conscious and direct connection with the religious claim. But it will not do this in any mechanical manner. It comes to us, indeed, with an authority which cannot be gainsaid. The fact that a hundred generations of religious-minded men have accepted it, affords a strong presumption that we of this generation can find in it a sufficient summary of the necessary presuppositions of our religious thought and conduct. But the presumption must be verified. For healthy human life is progressive. Each generation starts, or ought to start, with a larger moral and mental equipment than that with which its predecessor started; with a larger outlook on life; with more highly developed sensibilities; with its hierarchy of deeper needs somewhat

differently arranged. The field of human experience is constantly extending, and as it extends, the new facts which emerge into consciousness must be taken into account. These new facts are organically connected with the old, and bear but a small proportion to them in number and importance. So it is highly probable that the old explanations will hold good for them, that what was good enough for our fathers will be good enough for us, for they were our fathers, and we are not very different from them. But we are to some extent different, and to that extent we are responsible for reconsideration and reconstruction. Nor can this responsibility be discharged by any process of formal adjustment. We must not take the new facts and try to force them into the old system from the outside; we must not try to mend the old garment with patches of new cloth. The new facts are not merely new in themselves: through their organic connection with the old they have renovated them as well. Old and new together constitute a living whole; they must be dealt with as such if we are to give a true account of the principles which underly them.

There is no evading this claim. Each generation must start afresh in its quest of truth. It must start from the facts of living

experience. It cannot take anything else for granted, not even the Christian Creed. That Creed was not originally superimposed from the outside. It was the outcome of persistent and continuous efforts on the part of men who had attained to certain vital religious experiences, and who were compelled, by the developing demands of their own intellectual life, by the pressure of hostile criticism, and by the exigencies of missionary propaganda, to state in explicit terms what those experiences were, and what light they threw on the nature of God and man, and on their relationships with each other. They have thus smoothed the path which leads to honest and intelligent belief, but every man who wishes to attain to such belief must tread that path for himself. He must, just as they did, begin with facts and work up from them. With the facts of the Gospel history carefully sifted and investigated; with the facts of the whole Christian movement; of its renovating power; of its beneficent results; of its intellectual and moral achievements. With the facts also of his own inner experience, of his own religious needs and aspirations, and of the satisfaction which he and countless others have attained in Christ.

How is this complex body of facts to be

explained? What principles will hold them together as a systematised and intelligible whole? The Catholic Creeds are the Church's answer to this question. We cannot, as I have said, accept this answer on trust. But it is so highly probable that it is the true answer, that we are justified in acting upon it and regulating our conduct by it. Indeed more than justified. We are bound to do so if we are to maintain and strengthen the experiences which we seek to explain. In practical affairs we must always start by acting under authority: it is only very gradually that we are able to substitute reasoned motives for unquestioning obedience. We do not wait to eat our breakfast till chemists and physiologists have demonstrated to us the advantage of doing so. The man who insisted on such demonstration as a preliminary to the act of eating would starve to death long before he could hope to understand it, or to work it out for himself. None but the insane, not even those rigid rationalists whose mental habit approximates so closely to that of insanity, would subject the satisfaction of vital needs to such a condition. Men eat because they feel hungry: they eat food, or this or that particular kind of food, because others who are subject to the same needs bear witness to

them that if they do so they will gain the satisfaction which they seek. When they themselves have achieved this satisfaction they no longer depend upon the testimony of others, but on that of their own experience. They were hungry and weak; they ate, and their hunger was assuaged and their strength renewed. This is a fact of experience which needs no demonstration, and the certitude of which no lack of demonstration can shake. It is the function of the intellect to explain it, but any explanation which the intellect offers must be brought to the test of the fact itself. All the physiologists and chemists in the world will not persuade a man who has achieved satisfaction of his bodily needs that he has not achieved it, or prevent a man who feels the pressure of those needs from using the means of satisfaction which previous experience has proved efficacious. His immediate rejoinder would be: "Your theories are at fault. I may not be able to say why or where, but that they are at fault I have no doubt, for they contradict a fact of experience of which I am quite certain."

Just so it is with the religious need, with the hunger of the soul. The man who is conscious of this hunger cannot but try to satisfy it: it is a matter of vital importance

to him that he should. How he can best do so he must, in the first instance, learn from others. If he is a member of a Christian community he looks for satisfaction in the ordinances and practices of the Christian Church. These come to him vouched for by the authority of a long line of men who have found in them that which he seeks. It is reasonable to anticipate that what they have found he can find too. So he identifies his life with that of the Church, and as he does so he finds that his anticipation is increasingly justified. Gradually but surely the authority of others is displaced by that of his own personal experience. About this experience he has no doubt at all: it is a fact to be explained, but which cannot be explained away.

But it has to be explained; and each man must, up to the level of his abilities, seek for its explanation in his own way. His attitude towards the authoritative doctrines of the Catholic Church is closely analogous to that of a scientific investigator towards the organised system of laws and theories which come to him vouched for by the authority of previous investigators in the same field of research. He will accept them as working hypotheses: he will not lightly dispute their validity. The fact that he cannot in this or that instance

connect them directly with his own experiences is not a sufficient reason for rejecting them. Such inability is much more likely to be due to the limitations of his own mental power or horizon than to their inadequacy. But he cannot rest content till the connection is established, and established in his own way. He must work up from the facts to the explanations, if his acceptance of the latter is to be final and complete. The reverse process, that of beginning with the explanations and fitting the facts into them, can never lead to real conviction. I must find myself, my own religious experiences, and needs, and aspirations, in the Catholic Creed, if I am to weave that Creed into the essential texture of my religious life. That I can find the Catholic Creed in myself, that there are certain main characteristics of my religious life for which it provides an intelligible explanation, is no sufficient guarantee of its truth. For the body of facts which have to be explained is constantly growing, and an explanation which was valid at one stage of their growth may not be so at a succeeding stage. It may have to be modified, or restated, or even rejected altogether in favour of another. This, as I have said, is not likely, for the growth is organic and very gradual, but it

is always possible, and intellectual honesty demands that the possibility should be recognised, and that at every stage the explanation should be tested anew.

But the pressure of this need for reinterpretation comes quite as much from the practical as from the intellectual side. Those of us who are chiefly concerned with practical affairs have daily demonstration of its urgency. The prevalence of the Christian movement, its influence on progressive human life, depends intimately on the extent to which Christians show themselves capable of translating their principles into the current phraseology, and of thus exhibiting them as the complete expression of those which the ablest and most virile minds are striving to express for themselves. Christians contend that they can be so exhibited, that in Christ all fulness dwells, that the principles involved in His revelation of God and man are fundamental and final. But the contention is a futile one, unless men can be brought to recognise its validity; and it is hopeless to look for such recognition on the part of the great majority of men if the approach to those principles has to be made through an unfamiliar region of archaic thought and language.

I am not now describing a situation which may occur. It has occurred: those of us who

mix at all freely among our fellow-men are confronted with it every day. There is no blinking the fact that a very large proportion of the ablest and most energetic men we meet in the ordinary intercourse of life do not consciously derive their working ideals and inspirations from Christianity, and make little or no conscious effort to connect them with its tenets. Not that they are, as a rule, unfriendly. They are quite willing that theologians should discuss religious problems: they often show a certain interest in such discussions: they regard it as quite fitting that clergymen and people of similar tastes should practise religious observances, and try to get others to do the same. But they do not practise them themselves, or at best merely pay them the formal deference of traditional or sentimental conformity. They make it quite plain, sometimes by open statement, more often by the practical conduct of their lives, that religion, or at any rate the Christian religion, is a matter which concerns them but little: something which lies outside the region of their real interests and pursuits.

That is the situation with which we are faced: only those who mix almost exclusively in religious circles can fail to recognise its gravity. It is not too much to say that it contains possibilities of development which may

easily find their outcome in the reduction of the Church to the status of a pietistic sect: a close community of ecclesiastical experts and dexterous devotees, living their own lives and working out their own ideals, but exercising a continually diminishing influence on the secular society which surrounds them. More than this. Some of us are beginning to feel that many of our accustomed methods of religious propaganda, so far from arresting this development, tend to accentuate it, tend to make the Christian movement more exclusive and self-contained, to alienate rather than attract many of those who are at present living outside its conscious influence.

For the root difficulty is that Christians to a large extent use a language which is not understood by ordinary folk. The ordinary, normal, healthy man understands what is meant by goodness: he becomes restive if we talk to him of righteousness. He understands what is meant by duty: he hardly listens if we talk to him of vocation. He understands us when we speak of moral depravity and reformation and progress: he pays small heed to statements about sin and conversion and sanctification. He recognises the claims of social obligation, of service, of disciplined, corporate action: he often has not even con-

sidered those of Churchmanship. I don't say that the first set of terms is interchangeable with the second; that the ideas for which they stand are identical with each other. But they are vitally connected; the latter are the fully developed form of the former, and can only be approached by the majority of men along the lines of this development.

Such instances might be indefinitely multiplied, but they are sufficient to illustrate my point. If the appeal of Christianity is to gain a real response, it must be made in language which those to whom it is addressed can understand: it must connect itself directly with facts which they already acknowledge, and principles the validity of which they already admit. Moreover, if the appeal is to be ultimate and fundamental, these facts and principles must be of a similar character: they must belong to the essential constitution of manhood, not to its surface sentimentalities. It is easy to make it in terms which are quite intelligible, but which are quite unworthy. We constantly hear it made in such terms by popular religionists, with the result that it has often come to be regarded as applicable only to weaklings and eccentrics, or to people who have lost their mental balance under the influence of temporary excitement. We can

never hope to christianise England by emotional exhortation, or by argumentative or didactic discussions starting from premisses which those whom we address do not understand, or, at any rate, do not recognise as self-evident. We must begin much deeper down. We must begin as Christ Himself began. We must begin with those premisses themselves. We must place the great facts of His Incarnate Life side by side with the primal needs of human nature, and let them establish their own vital connection with each other. We must place them there under conditions which render their mutual affinities plainly apparent. We must translate them into the terms of human experience, and of present-day human experience. We must discard all antiquated phraseology, and use a language which ordinary healthy men can easily understand. Not merely nor chiefly that of vocal utterance, but also the far more impressive language of actual life and conduct; of personal power and influence and sympathy and inspiration. Bring men first to realise their own ultimate needs, and then present Christ to them as the Satisfier of those needs: Christ expressing His activities under the conditions of present-day life; Christ making His claim in the phrases of present-day intercourse; Christ acting and speaking among

men through the agency of the members of His Body; Christ revealing Himself to twentieth-century Englishmen under the guise of a twentieth-century Englishman, just as He revealed Himself to first-century Jews under that of a first-century Jew.

For us of the clergy whose work lies in the great centres of intelligent population this problem of reinterpretation is, as I have said, one of the most urgent practical importance. We must reinterpret if we are to gain a hearing. We must translate our ideals and our claims into terms which ordinary, healthy-minded people can understand. Unless we can do this effectively the best manhood of England will inevitably look elsewhere for guidance and inspiration. It is already beginning to do so. We are painfully conscious of the fact; we are painfully conscious that the Church includes among her convinced adherents only a small proportion of the effective population, of the men of power and energy and initiative. It is not that we are not working hard; some of us are working very hard, and our general standard of work is rising daily. This is generally acknowledged, and secures us a large measure of respect from strenuous and active men. But it does not secure us their attention. Our ways, they tell us, are not their ways:

our thoughts are not theirs. There must, they may admit, be something in beliefs which produce such a large measure of self-sacrifice and self-restraint; but it is not something which concerns them.

It does concern them, and concern them vitally. Many of the men who speak and act thus are already essentially Christian: they already possess the very qualifications which Christ demands in His followers. He needs their conscious co-operation in working out His world purpose: their energy and resource and capacity for leadership are just what He requires. Without their co-operation His cause is stayed, the establishment of His Kingdom delayed. And He has sent us to deliver to them His message. But they do not accept it, they hardly even realise that it is addressed to them; and that because they do not understand it, because the vocabulary we use is largely unintelligible by them. We shall not make it intelligible by constant repetition or loud vociferation. We can only do so by learning their language, and translating our message into its terms. True men will accept Christ when they find themselves in Him, when they recognise the best possibilities of their manhood realised in Him: not merely the possibilities of a bygone age, but those which

have emerged into the consciousness of the present age. It is this Christ whom we are called to present to them, and we can only do so, so far as we have interpreted Him thus for ourselves, and for our whole selves. We must begin by putting searching questions to ourselves. Why do I accept Christ? How far do I find the possibilities of my complete manhood realised in Him? How far do its aspirations and strivings find their points of attachment in His? How far can I honestly say that the Christian Creed is the summary of the working principles of my life? Not merely a series of statements which I can justify on intellectual grounds, or which I am willing to accept because of the authority which lies behind them, but the necessary expression of living truths implicit in my own living experience? It is only when we have asked ourselves questions such as these, and have been able to some extent to answer them honestly and satisfactorily, that we can with any confidence present the Christ whom we have thus made our own for the acceptance of others. So far as we can tell men of a living Christ whom we have seen with our own eyes, and heard with our own ears, and handled with our own hands, they will listen to us. They will not listen so long as we merely repeat to

them the testimony of others. And the first test of the reality of our vision is that we should be able to describe it in the terms of our accustomed phraseology.

So it is no mere intellectual interest which impels us city workers to this task of reinterpretation. We are being forced to it by the pressure of circumstances. The possibility of dealing successfully with the practical problem with which we are confronted depends intimately on the extent to which we can accomplish it. It is in the context of this consideration that the following pages should be read. They make no claim to speculative completeness. They are written to meet the known needs of known men. They do not, I think, contain a single statement of importance which has not been inspired by personal knowledge of such needs. The views, or rather the point of view, summarised in them have proved helpful to a good many. For this I have their own personal assurance, and it is at their request that I have put them into book form, in the hope that they may be helpful to many more.

A word as to Modernism. I have used the term freely in the first three chapters, and have identified myself to a very large extent with the general mental attitude and logical method connoted by it. This method is not peculiar to the

Modernist movement: it is, as I have tried to show, merely the scientific method applied to the subject matter of theology. But the Modernist movement seems to me of specially hopeful augury, because the circumstances under which it has arisen provide some guarantee that the facts with which it deals are the complete facts of religious experience and not some isolated section of them. Professor James, in his very interesting book on "The Varieties of Religious Experience," tells us that he designedly leaves out of account ecclesiastical religion. He says: "I propose to ignore the institutional branch entirely, to say nothing of the ecclesiastical organisation, to consider as little as possible the systematic theology and the ideas about the gods themselves, and to confine myself as far as I can to personal religion pure and simple." That seems to me all one with saying that he refuses to consider the religious problem in its entirety: the problem of the religious life as it affects not this or that segregated department of human nature, but as it affects the whole manhood, and claims to be the expression of its complete activity.

For man's nature is essentially social, and is incapable of its complete expression or development save under social conditions. A religion which is to meet his requirements must be

an ecclesiastical religion: must express itself in social forms and make its claims through the medium of social institutions. Individual religion, so far as it is individual, must be abnormal: must be relative to the abnormal development of some particular faculty or tendency. It is quite in keeping with this principle that Professor James seeks for characteristic examples of such religion in cases admittedly pathological: for the abnormal is always to a greater or less extent pathological.

Now the Modernist movement has arisen within the Roman Church, and is chiefly voiced by men officially connected with her normal system: not by monks or mystics, but by secular priests trained for, and employed in, working her traditional and authorised machinery. And the normal Roman Church, whatever her faults in other respects, has never lost sight of the fact of the essentially social nature of man. She has always insisted upon placing him in his social context, and upon interpreting his responsibilities and possibilities in that context. Hence any one brought up as a Roman Catholic who tries to deal with the religious problem in a liberal spirit starts with a great advantage. He knows what that problem is: he knows what religion means: he knows that any interpretation of its content and its claim which does not meet the needs of

the whole manhood stands self-condemned. He is far less likely than a man brought up in an individualistic system to mistake mere sentimentalism for religion.

But he also starts with a great disadvantage. The traditional attitude of the Roman Church has for many centuries been one of intellectual seclusion and obscurantism. She has placed her official imprimatur on a false logical method, and as a result has bound herself in intellectual fetters which nothing short of a revolution can free her from. Individual Roman Catholics who have recognised this and have forced their way into a region of intellectual freedom are apt to be dazed by its brightness. It will take them some time before they get their true perspective: before they see things in their true proportion: before they can distinguish fact from fancy. We must expect some rather wild rationalising from them at first: we must expect them to lose their way along unaccustomed paths. And the expectation is being realised. Some Modernists are sedulously engaged, as I have tried to point out, in turning their logic upon itself: in destroying the very presuppositions from which it starts. I have given a conspicuous example of this tendency in the text. I merely anticipate what I have said there in order to make my general attitude quite clear. It is one thing

to accept a logic which insists on beginning with facts, and which solely concerns itself with their explanation. It is quite another thing to admit the legitimacy of speculations which leave us with no real facts to explain.

W. H. C.

BIRMINGHAM, 1*st February* 1909.

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(1) It provides Christian apologetic with a method completely congruous with that of modern scientific thought. Starting from the facts of Christian history and experience it offers no opposition to their close and critical investigation. It only demands first-hand knowledge of the facts on the part of those who profess to explain them. When this condition is satisfied only one explanation will be found to be adequate 55-57

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(2) It places the Christian movement in line with that of modern democracy 58

(3) It restores the true logic of pre-scholastic Christian thought. The great Fathers of the Church devoted their chief energies to safeguarding the foundation facts of the Christian revelation, and to securing that they should be passed on in their integrity. They always began with these facts and reverted to them. The test of the truth of a doctrine was the extent to which it served to hold them together and to relate them to other facts. The impulse to which the doctrinal system of the Church owed its origin was practical rather than intellectual. The Trinitarian formula, for instance, was the Church's answer to questions forced upon the Christian consciousness by the initial facts of its own religious experience 58-61

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CHURCHMANSHIP AND CHARACTER

I

MODERNISM: ITS PROBLEM STATED

THE Modernist movement is modern only in name. The spirit of which it is one of the present-day expressions belongs to the very essence of the true Christian spirit. It is the spirit of men who feel impelled to relate their religious experiences and beliefs to all their other mental and practical activities; to bring out into explicit consciousness their essential connections with each other; to remove all obstacles of expression, or method, or arrangement which prevent these connections from being recognised, and thus both to deepen and enrich their own religious life, and to place its treasures more readily and freely at the disposal of others.

Intelligent Christians at every stage of the

Church's history have made this effort; indeed must make it. It is quite impossible for a man who believes that all truth comes from God to keep his intellectual life and his religious life in two separate compartments, and to acquiesce in their development in independence of each other. He is bound by the deepest necessities of his nature to seek to harmonise them, bound to try and relate them to each other in the unity of his own self-consciousness. He may not succeed in the effort; the richer his personal development is, the less likely he is to succeed. But so long as this development proceeds, and that ought to be as long as his life lasts, he is bound to go on with the work of reconciliation. He is bound to do so because his own nature demands it. His personal life is a unity, and the different expressions of that life must share in its unity. He is bound to do so because God demands it. He demands the conscious submission of the whole manhood to His will, and such submission cannot be complete until all the activities of his nature find their source and centre in the experiences which are the most direct revelation of that will. He is bound to do so because his obligations to his fellowmen demand it. His personal knowledge of God is not a private possession. It is an

attainment which God calls him to pass on to others, and this he can only do through the medium of the modes of thought and language current in the society to which he belongs.

Now Modernism, as I have said, is one of the present-day expressions of this effort, but the circumstances under which it has arisen invest it with a very special interest and significance. For the Modernist movement has arisen in the very bosom of the Roman Catholic Church, and that Church has hitherto been regarded as the representative of the least sympathetic attitude towards all that goes by the name of modern thought. Not that the official Roman Church denies, or ever has denied, the necessity for the reconciliation of thought activity and religious activity. Indeed her official tendency has always been in the direction of a strenuous and exacting rationalism. She has never admitted for one instant that her doctrines and practices are out of accordance with the requirements of reason. She has always claimed that her whole system is articulated together by reasonable processes. And what is more, given the premisses from which that system starts, there is no doubt that the claim holds good. But it is with regard to these premisses that her attitude has hitherto

been quite inflexible and unbending. No one who has studied official Romanism can accuse it of being either irrational or illogical. On the contrary, it is steeped through and through with the spirit of rationalism: it is the very embodiment of logical consistency. But the rationalism is one which is tied down to certain presuppositions about which no question must be raised: the logic is one which has to start from these presuppositions, rigidly defined, and to proceed by syllogistic methods to deduce from them conclusions equally rigid. Given these presuppositions, given the premisses from which its logical processes start, and it is hardly too much to say that the Roman system of theology is intellectually unassailable.

It is, however, these very presuppositions, these very premisses, which modern thought is calling in question, and against such an attack the traditional apologetic of the Roman Church is powerless. If the foundations are undermined the whole fabric of speculation and practice which formal logic has erected upon them falls to pieces. Its very logical consistency becomes a source of weakness rather than of strength, for the interdependence of its different parts involves the destruction of all in that of one.

That, then, is the menace with which Roman

theology is faced. But it is a menace which is directed against traditional Protestant theology as well; and more especially against the predominant section of Protestant theology which traces its intellectual ancestry to the teaching of Calvin. The premisses from which Calvin started were different in content from those of Rome, but they were identical in logical form and conception. Both Romanism and Calvinism start from the conception of a revelation given in terms which are capable of definite and explicit statement, and which, thus formulated, serve as the premisses of all succeeding Christian thought and speculation. Any conclusions deduced from these premisses, provided they are correctly deduced, have the same validity as the original revelation; indeed, they are implicitly included in it, and only need to be brought out into explicit consciousness. No doctrine or practice or institution which fails to satisfy this test can be admitted within the province of revealed truth. If consistent with that truth, it may be held as a private but unessential opinion; in cases where it can be shown to be inconsistent, it must be repudiated and disavowed. In other words, Christian theology has been presented by the main body of its exponents for the last five hundred years as a science

analogous to that of pure geometry, in which the whole science is contained potentially in its definitions and postulates and axioms. A science capable of indefinite development and expansion, just as geometry is, but only along the lines of deductive reasoning. From beginning to end, from its most elementary principles to its most elaborate and far-reaching speculations, a rigid system, bound together by the necessary and unalterable laws of formal thought.

This, as I shall point out later on, is not the original conception of Catholic theology. It is really the product of that alliance of Christian thought with the Aristotelian philosophy which circumstances forced on the Church in the early Middle Ages, and which gradually came to self-consciousness in the writings of the Mediæval schoolmen, and found its most exhaustive expression in the Summa of St Thomas Aquinas. During the Middle Ages Scholasticism held almost undisputed supremacy over men's intellects, and not merely theological but all other forms of thought were dominated by its methods and presuppositions. Thus physical science was regarded as a purely deductive science. It started from certain truths about the physical world supposed to have been revealed by God

to man, and it proceeded to draw deductions from those truths by syllogistic methods, and to explain the phenomena of nature in accordance with these deductions. But the facts of nature refused to be so explained. Scholastic science, for instance, declared that the sun goes round the earth, and pointed for proof to direct statements made by men inspired by God. But Galileo found that, as a matter of fact, the earth goes round the sun, and that, therefore, these statements, and the deductions from them, were out of accordance with the actual reality of things. This was but a conspicuous example of a movement of thought which gathered strength every day, and which threatened the very foundations on which scholastic science stood. For a time it was possible for authority to suppress the expression of the movement, and to keep it beneath the surface. Galileo, brought before the tribunal of the Inquisition, was forced to a verbal recantation; but it was only verbal. No fiat of authority could convince him, or those whom he represented, that the law which they had discovered was untrue. This could only be done along the lines of the method by which they had discovered it—the method of careful observation of facts, and of unwearied attempts to correlate and connect

them together. But the further application of this method only confirmed the truth of their conjecture. More than that, it revealed on every side further discrepancies between the laws which govern the world of natural phenomena, and those which, according to the teaching of scholastic science, ought to hold good there. So long as its teaching was supported by official authority, and so long as that authority was able to enforce its decrees, men could not openly repudiate it. But the time at length came when this was possible. The break up of the feudal system, combined with the rediscovery of the Greek language and literature, released social and intellectual forces which had been silently working in Mediæval Europe, and enabled them to express themselves openly, and to embody themselves in a great movement of religious and scientific thought. On the religious side this movement produced the Reformation and the counter Reformation; on the scientific side it gave rise to the Baconian philosophy.

In that philosophy the whole growth of modern science is contained in germ. Its marvellous achievements during the last three centuries are the direct result of the application of the method which is associated with Bacon's name.

He did not invent the method. It was indeed the accustomed method of the Catholic Church before Scholasticism had laid its dead hand on man's intellect. But he was the mouthpiece of its revival when the weakening of Roman absolutism made its revival possible.

It was a method diametrically opposed to that of Scholasticism. "Begin with revealed dogmas," said Scholasticism, "and explain facts by them, or by logical deductions from them." "No," said Bacon; "you must begin with facts and let them explain themselves. You must carefully observe them, and by experiment and trial find the laws which connect them with each other. Then you must work up from these to higher and more general laws. You can test the truth of the latter by the reverse process: by deducing from them the facts which they are intended to explain. But you must arrive at the laws by induction from the facts themselves. The facts are the starting-point: the facts are the constant test, and standard of reference. A law which holds them together is a true law just because it does so. A law which does not hold them together must be rejected as untrue whatever weight of authority lies behind it."

Now this Baconian method, as I have said, very rapidly established its supremacy in the

province of physical science, and achieved results which soon made that supremacy unquestioned. Scholasticism quietly withdrew its claim in that province: it practically fell into disuse there. No natural philosopher of repute thought of approaching the problems with which he had to deal from the standpoint of the old schoolmen. The idea that God had revealed to men the laws of the natural world, and that a statement of those laws was included in the deposit of revealed truth, was on all sides abandoned. A man who advocated this idea was henceforth regarded as a mere crank, a mere eccentric; he was no longer treated even seriously.

But the case was different in the region of theology. There Scholasticism still held almost undisputed sway. God might not have revealed the laws of the natural world, but He had once for all revealed those of the spiritual world. This, as I have said, remained still the base assumption of theology: of Protestant just as much as Catholic theology. Calvin was quite as much a Schoolman as Ignatius Loyola. To both of them alike theology was essentially a deductive science: a science which started from certain fixed and unalterable premisses, invested with Divine authority, and whose whole function

was to draw conclusions from these premisses by processes of formal reasoning. They differed, indeed, as to what the premisses were—differed acutely and violently. The Protestants declared that they must be drawn from the Bible and the Bible only; the Catholics held that to the Bible must be added the authorised traditions of the Church. They differed, too, as to the right of access to the deposit of revealed truth. The Catholics declared that this was reserved to the Church, acting through her authorised officers. The Protestants held, in theory, the right of private judgment, though in practice they by no means always acted on this theory, as Servetus and others found to their cost. But both Catholics and Protestants were at one in their conception of revelation, and of the logical method by which they derived their doctrines and practices from the storehouse of revealed truth.

Here, then, we find two great systems of thought developing side by side, but on completely different lines, and by the use of completely different logical methods: scientific thought essentially inductive; theological thought essentially deductive. For a time it was possible for them to maintain their independence: possible for theologians to go their way and for scientists

to go theirs. But such a state of things could not last. Man's nature is a unity. The facts of his spiritual and of his natural life intertwine with each other, and depend upon each other, at every turn. They cannot be kept apart or considered apart. The sciences which deal with them must sooner or later invade each other's territories. Sooner or later they must come face to face, and either adjust their claims or declare open war.

That is what has been happening during the last hundred years. The scientific method, learnt in the study of natural phenomena, has been gradually extended to other departments of human knowledge, and in some of them has achieved almost equally remarkable results. More especially has this been the case in the province of history, and in the investigation of the evidence by which historical facts are supported. It is on this side that the conflict between the rival forces of science and theology has now become acute.

For Christianity is essentially a historical religion; a religion which traces its origin to certain definite historical events. The record of these events is found in certain documents. Our estimate, then, of the certainty and character of their occurrence must depend on our estimate

of these documents. Are they authentic? Had those who wrote them first-hand knowledge of the facts which they recorded, and were they capable of giving a true account of these facts?

These are quite vital questions. They cannot be evaded or postponed. It is impossible to warn scientists off from the study of the Gospels on the plea that they are inspired writings, and are, therefore, not subject to the ordinary laws of historical criticism. Their immediate rejoinder is: "On what grounds do you regard them as inspired? If on the ground that they are historically authentic and accurate, that is begging the very question which we wish to investigate; if on some other grounds, what are they?"

There is no answer to this. Christianity cannot claim to be a historical religion, and at the same time to forbid examination of its historical sources. The Bible documents must, in the first instance, be treated like any other documents professing to narrate historical facts; they must be subjected to just the same tests which we would apply to them. It is only when they have emerged from this ordeal, only when that which is authentic and indisputable in them has been separated from that which is conjectural or plainly unhistorical, that theology can come

in and explain and apply the former by its doctrines of inspiration and revelation. Such doctrines must not be formulated beforehand and superimposed upon the facts. They must be the outcome of careful investigation and observation of these facts. They are valid just so far as they explain them: they are untrue if they are out of accordance with them. It is to the facts, then, that we must get back in the first instance. Our first duty is to get a clear view of them. And we must enter on this effort so far as possible unbiassed by any preconceived notions as to their religious significance. We must treat the evidence for them on its own merits, and on that alone. Christianity cannot claim to be a historical religion, and at the same time claim to dictate to history what conclusions it is to arrive at.

That is the demand which historical science is making, and it is a demand which it is impossible for Christian theology to refuse. Of course Christians at first resented, and bitterly resented, such an intrusion on a domain which they regarded as the chief feeding ground of their own spiritual life. Their deepest susceptibilities were touched when facts which were for them vital centres of religious consolation and inspiration and hope were brought under the

hard dry light of critical investigation. It was quite natural that they should express their resentment in words, and often very hard and bitter words. Probably the majority of earnest Christians maintain this attitude of hostility still. In many a pious home the methods and conclusions of the Higher Criticism, as it is called, are regarded as the outcome of some evil spirit which has possessed the age, and which it is their bounden duty to oppose and exorcise by every means in their power. But the attitude is an impossible one: as impossible as that of those worthy Cardinals who forced Galileo to his formal recantation. The Higher Criticism has proved its right to be regarded as a legitimate science by its success in the secular province; it cannot be excluded from the province of religious belief, so far as that belief depends on historical facts and historical evidence.

But its admission to that province is producing very disturbing results. It has already rendered necessary a drastic reconsideration and restatement of the traditional conceptions of Inspiration and Revelation. These conceptions have never been authoritatively defined by the Christian Church. But the predominant assumption of Christian theology hitherto has

been that the Biblical documents contain the record of religious principles and facts transmitted directly and almost mechanically from God, and which, therefore, as thus transmitted, are invested with the character of absolute and unchangeable truth. Until comparatively recently the majority of orthodox Christian theologians held that the actual words in which these truths are expressed are similarly vouched for by Divine authority: that the Biblical writers acted merely as amanuenses of the Divine utterances, writing down exactly what they heard, without any addition or subtraction of their own. This theory found its most complete expression in the old Rabbinical Schools. According to them all the writers of the Old Testament wrote, much as Moses did, at the direct dictation of God. The actual words they used, the actual construction of the sentences, were delivered to them from God's own lips. They may not all have received their message, as Moses is said to have done, through the hearing of the outer ears, but however they received it, whether through visions, or trances, or by some other means, it was God's message, words and sense alike, and their function consisted solely in transmitting it accurately to their fellowmen.

This theory of Verbal Inspiration, in a somewhat mitigated form, was generally accepted in the Middle Ages, and continued to be accepted by the great majority of Christians, whether Protestant or Catholic, up to quite recent times. It was, indeed, the correlative of the scholastic conception of theology which has for the last six centuries been predominant. A deductive system which starts from clear-cut premisses must have such premisses to start from; any inaccuracy in these even of a verbal kind, to some extent vitiates the conclusions drawn from them.

But even before the days of the Higher Criticism theologians had begun to abandon the theory as altogether incapable of defence. A very slight examination of the Bible shows that it contains discrepancies of the most obvious kind, discrepancies which no ingenuity can reconcile: discrepancies of verbal statement, discrepancies of arrangement, discrepancies in the narration of events. Such discrepancies are inconsistent with any mechanical theory of inspiration and revelation. The human agent must have been more than a merely passive instrument in the hands of God: he must have contributed something of his own to the message he was inspired to deliver: there must be a

human element in it which will account for its ofttime lack of accuracy and consistency.

So the theory of verbal inspiration has gradually been exchanged for one which holds that though the words of the message were not transmitted by God, the message itself comes direct from Him and bears with it His absolute imprimatur. Under this theory Scholasticism can still save its face. The Divine message, carefully formulated, can still supply it with the premisses which it needs as the starting-point of its deductive processes.

But further investigation tends to show that this, its last line of defence, will soon be beaten down; for the discrepancies noticeable in the Biblical writings extend far beyond the region of verbal statement or arrangement. They extend to ideas, to general points of view, to whole lines of thought, and even to the fundamental truths from which these lines of thought start. Take the New Testament writings, for instance. It is becoming increasingly difficult for any fair-minded Christian to deny that the critics are right when they say that these writings are by no means homogeneous with each other: that they represent widely different spiritual and intellectual aptitudes and points of view. It is impossible, for instance, to deny marked differ-

ences in these respects between the Synoptic Gospels and the fourth Gospel, and between both of these and St Paul's writings—differences not merely in minor details, but extending to leading ideas and modes of presentation of fundamental truths, and to be explained only by the fact that the writers of these different documents apprehended these truths themselves in very different intellectual and spiritual contexts.

Such an explanation is, however, absolutely inconsistent with any theory of inspiration which would answer the purposes of scholastic theology. If the Gospel meant one thing for St Paul, another for St John, and another for the Synoptics, and if their modes of presenting it differed accordingly, it is absolutely impossible to draw from their writings alone a clear-cut statement of Gospel truth such as will serve as the basis of a system of deductive thought. It is impossible to deduce one consistent system of theology from a book containing the germs of several systems which, placed side by side with each other and dealt with on the same level, are completely different from each other. Doubtless a higher unity may be found behind these differences: we Christians believe that it can be found; but it cannot be found by any mechanical

adjustment of ideas with ideas, of statements with statements. Attempts at harmonising the New Testament writings on this level are a mere futile waste of time. Any theory of inspiration which will explain the facts must be one which will make room for a much larger human element in revelation than the majority of theologians have hitherto been willing to acknowledge. It must be one which presents revelation as the outcome of free co-operation between God and man; which regards the human agent not as a mere passive instrument, but as contributing his share to the message, a share influenced largely by the special idiosyncrasies which mark off his personality from that of others.

Given that these conclusions are valid—and, as I have said, there seems to be little doubt that they are in the main valid—a completely different conception of the character of the New Testament writings from that ordinarily held by scholastic theologians becomes inevitable. The theories of inspiration and revelation hitherto taught by them must be profoundly modified, and the whole logical structure of the system of theology supported by these theories must be modified accordingly. That is the situation with which the Modernists are faced. They have themselves for the most part been brought

up under scholastic influences and trained in scholastic modes of thought; but they now find the whole fabric of Scholasticism undermined and falling to pieces about their ears. If they are to save their faith they feel that they must find safer and deeper foundations for it; foundations capable of supporting a structure against which the waves of scientific thought and speculation will beat in vain.

The primary aspect of this situation is intellectual, but practical issues of the most momentous importance are involved in it as well. For the gradual displacement of scholastic by scientific modes of thought has affected not merely the intellectual but the whole social life of Western Europe. The democratic movement of modern times is its direct product. As in the intellectual province men have come to reject the idea of absolutism in thought, so in the social province they have come to reject that of absolutism in Government. Closely analogous to the method of seeking scientific laws by the interrogation of facts, is that of formulating legislative enactments and principles of Government by constant reference to the needs of the people who will be affected by them. The days of prescriptive authority are numbered. No persons, or class of persons, are now listened to

who claim a right to govern other than that conferred upon them by considerations of general welfare. Their authority is recognised so far, and only so far, as its exercise can be shown to conduce to the public good.

It is with this democratic movement that the scholastic theology and the institutions and usages in which it is embodied are confronted. Is it any wonder that there is a discrepancy between them, and that this discrepancy is becoming greater every day? They differ essentially in spirit, in outlook, in their line of intellectual and practical movement. The difference is not one of mere misunderstanding; of failure to appreciate each other's point of view. If it were only this a reconciliation would be possible. But it goes a great deal deeper down. It is of a kind which makes final reconciliation intellectually unthinkable, and practically impossible. Men who stand committed to a system of formulas rigidly articulated to each other by necessary laws, and who insist on making the facts of growing experience conform to this system whether they will or no, cannot in the last resort come to terms with men who begin with the facts of experience themselves, and insist that no system of life can be valid which does not explain these

facts, or which does not take full cognisance of growing aspirations and growing needs, and place men in a line of movement which makes for their satisfaction.

This is a fact which there is no evading. The breach between the democratic movement and dogmatic and institutional Christianity is becoming wider every day, and the tendency to divergence is bound to go on strengthening itself so long as, and so far as, Christianity stands committed to scholastic presuppositions and methods.

And the pity of it is that the breach is by no means inevitable. So far from the democratic spirit being antagonistic to the Christian spirit, it is the direct product of that spirit, the direct outcome of moral and spiritual forces liberated by the Christian revelation, and given their first embodiment in the life of the early Christian communities. On the day when Christianity is once more true to its principles and ideals it may hope to assimilate to itself the spiritual, and, therefore, the permanent elements in the democratic movement, and to give that movement the leadership which it now so sorely needs. But that day will not come till the Christian spirit has freed itself from the network of formal speculation with which its activity is at present embarrassed.

Here, then, is the complicated and far-reaching problem which Modernism has set itself to solve: nothing else than the problem of translating Christian faith and practice into the terms of the thought and language of the present day, and of thus enabling them to interweave themselves with the texture of modern intellectual and spiritual movement.

II

MODERNISM AND THE NEW TESTAMENT DOCUMENTS

It is no longer possible to maintain that the New Testament writings are formally consistent with each other, either in narration or exposition. The different accounts which they give of Christ's words and deeds, though in substantial agreement, present many detail discrepancies which fair-minded exegesis finds it difficult, if not impossible, to harmonise. But it is in their theological interpretations of these words and deeds that their tendency to divergence is most marked. Here it extends far beyond minor details, and shows itself in the leading conceptions from which the different writers start, in their philosophical presuppositions, in their ways of approaching the fundamental problem of God's relation to man and man's relation to God. Placed side by side with each other, and viewed on the same level, it is quite impossible to reconcile the theology of the Synoptics with that of St John, or either of them with that

of St Paul; while still further variations are apparent in the other New Testament writings, in the Epistles, for instance, of St James and St Peter.

But these writings must constitute a unity of some kind. The possibility of a consistent and connected Christian theology depends intimately upon the inner consistency of the foundation facts and principles of which they are our main source of information. The possibility of the intelligent acceptance of Christianity as a historical religion is similarly conditioned. But Christian theology has maintained itself for eighteen hundred years; the Christian religion has been, and still is, accepted by countless numbers of intelligent men and women. This twofold fact alone proves beyond doubt that the condition of unity must in some sense be fulfilled. The question is, "In what sense?"

Let us look at the facts of the case, or some of the chief of them, and see how far they suggest a satisfactory answer to this question.

First, then, there is the fact that the New Testament writers never claim for themselves the kind of inspiration which has been attributed to them by theologians of later ages. In their narration of events they never claim inspired inerrancy; the most they claim is that they were

themselves eye-witnesses of these events, or that they had received their information from others so qualified, and worthy of credit. And it is just the same in the case of their doctrinal and practical teaching. They write, indeed, as men who are confident of the Divine guidance, but they never claim this guidance as their special and exclusive prerogative; they assume all through that their hearers are also subject to its influence. Hence their teaching is supported by no extrinsic authority beyond that conferred upon it by their own reputation or official standing. It is presented on its own merits, it claims acceptance on the grounds of its accordance with right reason, and with the beliefs already prevalent in the Christian community. This is a fact of great importance. I don't think that it can be disputed by any one who examines the evidence, unbiassed by some preconceived theory of inspiration. There is no trace of absolutism in the authority claimed by the New Testament writers for their teaching. They claim, indeed, to be endowed with special qualifications, but they assume all through that their hearers are similarly endowed, though not always in an equal degree.

This brings us to a second fact, equally indisputable. The New Testament documents were

not intended for general publication. They were written by Christians for Christians: for men who were already acquainted with the main facts which they relate, and who had already acquired some knowledge of the teaching based upon these facts. Their whole construction and tenor show that they were not designed as an introduction to Christian truth, but with the object of clearing the ideas and correcting the deficiencies of men who had already to some extent assimilated that truth.

But more than this. They were not originally written for, or placed at the disposal of, the whole Christian community. The requirements which they were intended to meet were in nearly every case local or personal; in some cases transitory, and comparatively trivial. Several generations elapsed before they were gathered together in one volume and made easy of access to all Christians alike. But during these generations the Christian community had been growing with great rapidity, and had developed a common system of belief and worship and organisation, which, in its main characteristics, it has ever since retained. That is a third fact, also of great significance.

Lastly, there is the fact that the Christian community gradually gathered these and other

writings together. That it subjected them to a searching scrutiny, none the less searching because it was made instinctively and almost unconsciously. That it hesitated for a time about some of them, that it excluded others, and that it finally accepted the books which now make up the New Testament canon, and decided to assign to them a position of altogether unique and special authority in its literature. From this decision it has never swerved. Ever since then the New Testament has been regarded by all Christians alike as their sacred book, the inspired and authorised storehouse of the essential facts and principles of their faith.

Now, putting all these facts together, what are we to make of them? What explanation suggests itself which will hold them together and make them intelligible? Only one line of explanation seems at all possible. The line which takes the Christian community itself as the starting-point, and reads the facts to which I have referred in the context of its organised, corporate life.

Starting thus, the facts which I have just summarised seem to fall easily into their places. The New Testament documents were written by Christians for Christians. Their authors, so far as they can be identified, were men of reputation

and standing, and in the great majority of instances they wrote with the object of edifying or exhorting or instructing the particular section of the Christian community with which they were locally or officially connected. Their writings would naturally be received by those to whom they were addressed with the respect due to their authorship. But their final acceptance as authoritative documents cannot be explained in this way. Other writings bearing distinguished names are known to have been in circulation in early times, but none of these secured a place in the sacred canon. Some of them were rejected altogether; others were given a place in the recognised literature of the Church, but a place of quite subordinate authority and importance. This points clearly to some discriminating test other than that of real or reputed authorship which the community instinctively applied. And the character of this test becomes apparent if we remember the conditions under which the Christian community came into being, and continued to exist for several generations. Its first members were personally trained and taught by its Founder. He provided them, so far as we know, with no literature of any kind; He certainly left behind Him no sacred book written by Himself, or vouched for by His

authority. He depended for the propagation of His teaching on instructed and inspired men, not on written records. And these men at first dealt with others as He had dealt with them. They passed on His teaching by word of mouth, they made provision for the training and instruction of their early converts in the society which they had been authorised to organise and govern. So long as the society remained small and locally concentrated such provision could be maintained under their own personal superintendence; but its immediate and rapid increase and extension made further provision necessary, and one of the forms which this took was that of written narration and exposition. It was thus that Christian literature arose. It had no place in the original constitution of the Christian society, but the rapidly growing needs of that society soon made it necessary, and gave it an important and permanent place there.

This literature, it is to be noticed, arose inside the Christian society itself, and was addressed, in the first instance, to men who were already well acquainted with the main facts of the Christian revelation and who had made these facts the basis by their religious faith and practice. Its reception by them would depend upon its accordance or lack of accordance with

the knowledge which they had already acquired and the beliefs they already held. This, then, was the discriminating test which the community instinctively applied, and the writings of the New Testament canon are the only writings which completely survived its application. They gradually acquired their position of unquestioned authority because the community found its own inner life reflected in them: because it recognised their accounts of its own fundamental beliefs as authentic and accurate, and their doctrinal and practical expositions of these beliefs as legitimate.

Now we can understand the sense in which, when the writings had been gathered together in a single volume, and had become the common possession of the whole Christian community, they came to be regarded as constituting a unity. It was in just the same sense that the community was conscious of its own unity. The community found its own inner life and the unity of that life reflected in them: the unity of an organised body expressing itself in many different forms through the agency of its different members. That is the only conception which meets the facts of the case. The community placed the same imprimatur on the theologies of the Synoptics and St Paul and St John, and

assigned the same value and authority to them all alike, not because these theologies were formally consistent with each other, but because it recognised in them legitimate expressions of its own corporate thought, capable of reconciliation in the unity of that thought.

But the New Testament writings came in time to be regarded, not merely as authoritative documents, but also as inspired. What meaning can we assign to the word inspiration here which is congruous with the facts to which we have referred? Following the same line of thought, we are led to the conclusion that it was its own inspiration which the community found in them. The inspiration of the New Testament writers was not regarded by themselves, or by other Christians of the time, as in any sense a mechanical endowment of which they were the specially appointed agents. The whole community shared in it: these writers were inspired because the community of which they were the mouthpieces was inspired; because the spirit of Christ was acting in it and working through it, and therefore in and through its different members. But the divine action of the Spirit did not override the action of the community, or of its individual members. Revelation was rather conceived as the outcome of free

co-operation between the Indwelling Spirit and their individual and separate wills. Hence any particular utterance of inspiration would necessarily include a human as well as a Divine element. It would necessarily bear traces of the personal characteristics of its human agent; of his limitations and idiosyncrasies, of his intellectual and moral equipment and point of view. In some cases the influence of these limitations might be predominant; in other cases it might be comparatively subordinate and unimportant. In the former cases the character of the utterance as an inspired utterance might be so much vitiated as to be almost valueless; in the latter, that character was substantially maintained. No two men could give exactly the same account of the same event even if they had been themselves eye-witnesses of it: still less could they do so if they had to depend largely on the witness of others. They could only describe it as it had impressed them, and the impression produced by it must depend largely on the point of view from which they regarded it, and the spirit in which they approached it. Just in the same way no two men could appreciate the moral and spiritual significance of such an event in exactly the same way, or state their interpretation of

this significance in the same terms. Here again differences would be bound to arise corresponding to the differences in their personal endowments and mental and moral training, and the stronger the individualities of the two men the greater these differences would be likely to be.

But the community did not demand any such impossible uniformity of narrative or exposition. What it did demand was that both narrators and expositors should be men thoroughly imbued with its own spirit, and it tested them in this respect by the extent to which their statements were in accordance with the expressions of that spirit of which it already had experience; by the extent to which their historical narrations were in substantial agreement with those which had from the first been incorporated with the foundations of its life, and to which their doctrinal and practical expositions agreed in principle and spirit with the teaching its members had all along received. The New Testament writings satisfied these requirements in a unique and conspicuous degree, and they were accordingly given a place of unique and conspicuous honour in its accredited literature. In them the community became possessed of a sacred book; a fixed standard of reference in all matters of fact and doctrine; a literary

embodiment of its own authority, and its own inspiration.

It may be objected here that there is no evidence to show that the members of the community themselves consciously realised the significance of the process which has just been described, while that process was taking place. As a matter of fact, even in the case of an individual man, such conscious realisation hardly ever accompanies the successive stages of an intellectual or moral movement of a fundamental kind. A man hardly ever realises the full significance of the moral and intellectual forces to which he is subject, and which are gradually moulding his complete character. A society never realises this significance till it becomes apparent in accomplished results. It is not till then that it becomes conscious of the influences to which it has been subject, and can estimate their character in the light of these results. It is only when the spiritual forces implicit in a community's life have won some position of spiritual advantage, that those who were agents in the struggle have opportunity and material for reflection. It is only then that they can hope to understand the complete plan of the campaign in which they had been taking part. While the struggle is going on, only the General

can understand this, and the General in this case is God.

There is nothing paradoxical then, there is nothing which is not obviously true, in the assertion that we Christians of the twentieth century can estimate the intellectual and religious significance of the movement which resulted in the formation of the New Testament canon far more fully and clearly than those who were themselves associated with that movement. But more than this. We are much better equipped for an effort of this kind than were even our immediate predecessors. Until comparatively recent times orthodox theologians felt compelled to defend a theory of inspiration which invested the New Testament writings with a sacrosanct character of an absolute and exclusive kind. It was a theory which could find no support in the history or contents of the writings themselves. It was, as I have said, the Mediæval version of the Rabbinical teaching with regard to the Old Testament Scriptures, which had been appropriated by an individualistic religious movement in the sixteenth century as the fundamental tenet of its theology, and passed down to modern times along with it. While the influence of that theology remained predominant, to attack the theory was regarded as all one with attacking

the foundations of the Christian faith: to defend it was assumed to be the bounden duty of those who held and valued that faith. But orthodox theologians themselves are coming to recognise that its defence is no longer possible. They are coming to realise that a book containing many formal inconsistencies of statement and interpretation cannot be made the basis of a system of formally consistent theological thought; that any such system derived from it must be one which finds its unity in some higher principle. They are coming to see, further, that a book produced by a society for its own purposes, and gradually accepted by it as authoritative and inspired, can have no higher degree of authority or inspiration than that possessed by the society itself. They are thus being forced little by little to exchange the barren conception of Christian theology as a product of speculative thought, for one which sees in it the progressive expression of a progressive corporate life.

The change of view is fundamental, but it is all to the good. For it means the gradual emancipation of Christian theology from a conception which sterilised it and placed it outside the movement of living and progressive thought. It means clearing the way for the presentation of Christianity in its true character: the

Christianity of the living Christ, embodied in, and manifesting Himself through, the organised activities of a living society. No rigid system of speculative doctrine and unalterable practices, but an adaptable growth capable of meeting the needs of a progressive age; a divinely inspired and organised movement which, amid all its varieties of expression, maintains its essential unity and identity, and safeguards their maintenance by placing the seal of its full authority on a collection of writings in which are recorded the foundation facts from which it springs and the essential principles involved in those facts, and by treating these writings, and the creeds in which their contents are summarised, as its final court of appeal and standard of reference.

This, in briefest outline, is the primary answer of Modernists to the questions forced upon Christians by the results of the scientific investigation of their sacred books. They claim that it is no new answer, invented to meet unexpected exigencies, but that it is in essential character the answer which would have been given to these questions by an intelligent Christian of the early centuries. It is impossible to conceive that any serious disturbance would have been caused to the faith of such a man by criticisms of the authorship of this writing or the apparent

inconsistencies of statement or argument in that. The foundations of his faith had been laid in a region of experience in which questions of this kind become of secondary and subordinate importance. They rested on the consciousness of Christ's presence in his own life, and in that of the society with which it had been incorporated. This consciousness had arisen in him through personal contact with others by whom it had already been achieved; it had passed from them to him as leaven spreads from point to point in a lump of dough. This was its characteristic process of propagation: a process which would have maintained itself had Christianity remained as it began, a religion without a literature. It did not remain so, it soon began to produce a copious literature; but it was at the bar of the same ultimate consciousness that this literature was tested, and only those parts of it which stood the test in a conspicuous degree were finally accepted as permanent parts of its organised apparatus of conversion and edification.

III

MODERNISM AND THE ULTIMATE BASIS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH

THE Modernist contention that the unity and inspiration of the New Testament writings must be looked for in those of the community which produced and certified them, carries us a certain distance, but not the whole distance. For the latter characteristics still remain to be accounted for. In what do they consist? How did consciousness of their existence assert itself in the minds of the members of the community, and become for them the dominating and directive principle of their corporate and individual life?

This question is quite ultimate. It is all one with the question of the ultimate character of Christian belief and of the evidence which produces and supports that belief. On the adequacy of the answer to it depends the vindication of the claim of Christianity to be reasonable in character, and capable therefore of holding a permanent and commanding place in the great formative forces of progressive

human life. How does Modernism deal with this fundamental problem?

Let us approach this question by means of a simple illustration. Here is a tree covered with fruit. A hungry man approaches it, and his whole attention is concentrated on the fruit. It is this aspect of the tree's life which appeals to him, which relates itself directly and predominantly to his needs. An artist approaches it, and sees in it a thing of beauty, a graceful combination of gnarled trunk, and waving leaves, and intertwined branches. A farmer approaches it, and he thinks of it as a useful shelter for his cattle; a merchant approaches it, and he thinks of the value of the timber it contains; a scientist approaches it, and recognises it as an example of this or that herbaceous species; and so on. The fact is there for all alike. But the interpretation of the fact varies from man to man in accordance with his needs and aptitudes and experiences. Each interpretation is true in itself, but it is partial. It is only when they are all combined that the full interpretation is attained, and a full definition is possible. No one of the observers whom I have mentioned — and their number might be multiplied indefinitely — could grasp this full interpretation for himself, or place its different elements in their true proportion to

each other. If they are sensible people they will recognise this, and while maintaining the validity of their own interpretations, and using the tree accordingly, will be willing, and even anxious, that the others should do likewise. If they are not sensible, but selfish and self-centred people, they will be intolerant of each other's views, and will resent any practical consequences which happen to follow from them. The artist will resent the hungry man taking any of the fruit, because he will say that it destroys the symmetry of the picture he is enjoying; the farmer will resent the others approaching the tree at all, lest they should disturb his well-fed cattle, which are sleeping peacefully beneath its shade; the merchant, if he had his way, would cut it down and turn it into dry timber. But the final decision does not lie with these individuals, but with the society to which they all belong. It is for the society to decide, not so much which view is true, for they are all true, as which is most important under the circumstances of the particular time and place; whether it is most conducive to the welfare of its members that the tree should be primarily regarded as a source of food supply, or as a subject of scientific investigation, or as an object of artistic admiration, or as an article of

commerce, or as an implement of agriculture. This decision may vary from place to place, and from time to time, but it will be deferred to in practice by all loyal members of the society. Not that any of them will give up his own views of which use of the tree is most important, or cease from trying to get it accepted. A well-ordered society will not demand this: it will only demand that until it has been accepted he will refrain from acting in accordance with it, so far as such action is inconsistent with the authoritative decision of the society on the question.

Now see what is implied in this illustration. Each different interpretation of the tree's character is relative to the special needs of the man who so interprets it. A man without any needs, or without any consciousness of needs which the tree could satisfy, would not interpret it at all; he would have no interest in it; he would pass it by as a thing of no account. It is true that this consciousness may not have arisen till the man saw the tree; that the hungry man did not feel his hunger till he saw the fruit; that the artist was not aware of his need of artistic satisfaction till its beauties were unfolded to him. But the consciousness of need must be there before any interpretation

is attempted; it is the antecedent condition and motive of the act of interpretation. Moreover, the proof that the interpretation is true, and that the tree is a real thing and not a mere creation of the man's own imagination, is to be found in the fact that the need which relates the man to it has been satisfied by it. The hungry man has eaten of its fruit, and his hunger has been assuaged; the farmer has brought his flocks to shelter under its shade, and they have been protected from the rain and sun. Of this fact he is quite certain; no arguments can shake this certainty; it belongs to a level of experience above and beyond all argument. Another point. All the different interpretations are partial because the needs to which they are relative are partial. But these needs are not contradictory or mutually exclusive, however much they may appear on the surface to be so. For they are common to all men, though in the case of any particular man only one of them may have come into explicit consciousness. The hungry man has in him the capacity to be an artist, and a farmer, and a man of science. These capacities may be very rudimentary and undeveloped, but they are there; they are capable of development, and as his development proceeds it will include them in its scope. Hence the

life of the community is more than the sum of the lives of the members of the community. It represents the more or less completely developed life of each individual member. The interpretation, then, which the community as a whole accepts and authorises will in the long run be one which will include all partial interpretations, and join them together in the unity of its corporate life. It is the full interpretation which each individual member will finally arrive at, though at present he may only appreciate some particular aspect of it, and may even regard other aspects as irreconcilable with this. He will not for long so regard them, however, if he lives in sympathy with the life of the community and tries increasingly to identify himself with its common efforts and aspirations and aims. As his manhood grows he will gradually become conscious of further capacities and further needs, and will thus gradually enlarge his mental conception so as to include the interpretations which are relative to the satisfaction of these needs.

Now in the light of this illustration let us turn to the problem with which we are dealing. Let us state this problem in its ultimate and most simple form. How did the first followers of Christ arrive at the conviction that He was

the Incarnate Son of God, and how did their conviction gradually develop itself into the Creeds, and institutions, and usages of the Catholic Church?

First, then, you will notice that Christ did not make His claim on all men indiscriminately; He distinctly said that He came not to call the righteous, that is, those who were morally and spiritually satisfied, but the sinners, those who were morally and spiritually dissatisfied. He again and again reiterated the statement that the majority of those whom He addressed, though they had ears, could not hear, though they had eyes, could not see. That it was only to those whose soul ears and eyes were open that He could make His appeal, that they only were capable of recognising His nature and His claim. To the former class, then, He spoke in parables and hard sayings, to the latter He unfolded the mysteries of the Kingdom without reserve.

In other words, Christ regarded the consciousness of moral and spiritual need as the absolutely necessary condition of the reception of His message, and recognition of His claim: a consciousness either already existing in those whom He addressed, or aroused into activity by His words and deeds.

It was, then, to men in whom this conscious-

ness was alive and active that Christ made His appeal. He came to them with the declaration "I am the way, no man cometh to the Father but by Me." The Father, the Fountain Source of the life which they craved, the Supreme Lawgiver whose voice they could hear speaking with more or less clearness through the dictates of conscience. The way to the Father. This was what Christ declared Himself to be. Those who joined themselves to Him joined themselves to the Father: for He and His Father, He declared, are one. This was His declaration. Could He make it good? Had it been made by an ordinary man those who heard it would not have paid much heed to it. But Christ was evidently no ordinary man. Men who were trying to obey the dictates of their own higher nature recognised in Him one in whom the possibilities of which they were conscious in themselves were already realised. It was on the basis of this recognition that He appealed to them to trust in Him, and to commit themselves wholly to Him. "Which of you," He asked, "convinceth Me of sin? and if I say the truth why do ye not believe Me?"

That is the ultimate argument of Christ. Its acceptance forms the entrance gate through which we pass into a region in which our conviction of

His Divine nature becomes assured. Let us make no mistake on this point. No miracle wrought by Christ could have proved Him to be the Son of God, no external evidence of any kind could have proved this. The power to work miracles belongs of right to God Incarnate in the flesh; a display of this power was necessary to arrest attention, to awaken enquiry, to free the moral and spiritual forces of the men who witnessed them, and to arouse in them the consciousness of their moral and spiritual needs. But it could not prove that He who wrought them was God Himself. Other explanations were possible. By the unbelieving Jews it was regarded as a proof of collusion with the Evil One. "He casteth out devils," they cried, "through Beelzebub, the Prince of devils." The conviction of the divinity of Christ, analysed to its ultimate grounds, rests on the testimony of conscience; on the instinctive recognition by that power with which God has endowed the human soul to be its medium of communication with Him. As the eye responds to light, so the conscience responds to Christ. The eye needs no proof that what it sees is light. The very act of vision carries its own proof with it. All it needs is to be open and alive and active. External witnesses may be necessary to stimulate

it to activity; argument and analysis are necessary later on to connect that activity with other activities, to tell us whence light comes, what its constituent elements are, and to teach us how best to strengthen our power of vision, and to use to the best advantage the resources which it places at our disposal. But the proposition "This is light" is not the outcome of argument; it is the statement of an instinctive and immediate judgment which no argument can produce, and which, once made, no argument can shake.

So it is with conscience, the eye of the soul. Its recognition of Christ as God is not the outcome of any argument, of any external witness. It only depends on its own activity and on Christ's presence. Let a man's conscience be alive and active, let his soul ears and eyes be open, let the clouds of prejudice and passion be cleared away, and then let him be brought face to face with Christ, and he needs no more to convince him that before him stands God Himself Incarnate in the Flesh. The response is instinctive and immediate, it is the response of organism to environment, of faculty to its true field of exercise. It is more, for conscience is more than the medium through which a God wholly outside us speaks to our souls.

God is already within us, our own nature in its ultimate essence is divine. And so the response of faith is as deep calling to deep: it is the sense of union between the Divine Life within us and the Eternal and Personal Source from which it comes. Doubtless external stimulus is needed to stir the conscience into activity: the stimulus afforded by joy or sorrow it may be, by the witness of others, by the enactment of external miracles. Doubtless, too, intellect can help in clearing away the prejudices and misunderstandings which often hinder the eye of faith from seeing its true object. But the act of faith itself transcends all external evidence and all intellectual processes; it is an act complete in itself, bringing its own assurance with it, an assurance which no external evidence can produce, and no external objections can shake. It is a supernatural act: the conscious recognition of the Divine by the Divine, the conscious union of God with His own.

Surely the teaching of the New Testament is quite clear with regard to this. "No man," says Christ, "cometh to Me unless the Father which sent Me draw him." You remember His words to St Peter in response to his recognition of Him as the Son of God? "Whom say ye that I am?" "Thou art the Christ,

the Son of the living God." Then Christ rejoined—"Flesh and blood hath not revealed this unto thee, but My Father which is in Heaven." Flesh and blood; the wonderful series of external events which he had witnessed since he had first followed Christ; the manifold experiences through which he had passed during that time; these had indeed formed necessary parts of a preparatory process, a clearing and energising of the soul eye, of the soul ear. But the act of recognition itself was not the outcome of these. It came from a higher source, and was the exhibition of a higher power. It was the act of God Himself, the instinctive response of God within him to God in the plenitude of His personal power without him. "The Spirit Himself beareth witness with our spirit that we are the children of God."

It was thus that the first followers of Christ attained to the conviction that He was the Incarnate Son of God. The ultimate grounds of this conviction lay in their permanent moral and spiritual needs, and in the fact that Christ satisfied these needs. God and God alone could do this, for these needs point to Him and can only be fully satisfied in Him: therefore Christ is God. Analyse Christian faith to its foundation, and it will be found in every case that

this is the bed rock on which it rests—the rock of inner personal experience, against which the waves and storms of argument and criticism beat in vain. When these have done their worst they leave untouched an ultimate fact of consciousness which has to be explained, but which no argument can explain away.

This conviction was common to all the first followers of Christ; but the interpretation of its content and its claim necessarily depended upon the kind of satisfaction which they had individually attained, and this in turn depended upon the individual needs to which this satisfaction was relative. These varied from case to case. St Peter found one kind of soul satisfaction in Christ, St John another, St Paul another, and so on with each of them in turn. Their interpretations of His teaching varied accordingly. Each of them was partial, and its verbal expression, and the intellectual development of that expression, were of necessity partial too. Thus we find that the Synoptic, and the Johannine, and the Pauline systems of theology differ widely from each other, both in the master conceptions from which they start and the lines of thought along which they proceed.

But the individual needs which brought men to Christ were only the entrance gates to deeper

needs. And the satisfaction which they attained they soon found to be relative to these latter: to the needs of their complete manhood; to the needs which they shared in common with their fellow-men. It was man in his fulness that Christ came to save. Man organically connected with his fellow-men: so closely related, so intimately dependent on them, that his well-being is unthinkable apart from theirs.

This is the significance of the event which took place on the first Whitsunday. It was on the whole body of believers assembled together that the Spirit was then outpoured. *On the whole body.* That is the crucial fact. The Christ Life in which the first believers shared, the Life in which they lived and moved and had their being, was no mere private endowment of isolated souls. It was bestowed as a common possession. It not only merged their lives into His Life, it merged them into each other as well. It welded them into Christ's Body: the living organism through which it expressed itself in its different activities. It was as members of His Body that they were united to Him; at all points their union with Him was mediated and maintained by their union with their fellow-Christians. Individual development henceforth was impossible on independent and isolated lines.

So far as it was a true development it must find a place in the unity of the common life; it became untrue, an expression of unregenerate self-will, when it disregarded that unity and threatened it with schism.

It is, then, in the light of this twofold conception of the essential character of the Christian life that Modernism is endeavouring to interpret the history of the Christian Church, and to justify her claim to be the continued embodiment and authoritative exponent of revealed truth. The endeavour is only in its initial stages. The project to which it is relative is a very far-reaching one. It is one which involves a fundamental restatement of many of our theological positions. But its importance cannot be exaggerated. Its success, so far as one can see, would immensely facilitate the work of the Church both on its intellectual and its practical side; it would make it immensely easier for us Christians to maintain our hold on modern civilised progress, and to secure for Christian ideals and influences a permanent and primary place among the formative forces which make for that progress.

For, in the first place, it puts the Christian movement in line with that of modern scientific thought. It accepts the logic of that thought,

and offers no opposition to the application of its methods to the facts of Christian history and Christian experience. The facts are there, they cannot be denied; the only question is how they are to be explained. We Churchmen claim that they can only be satisfactorily explained by the hypothesis of a historical revelation committed to a divinely inspired society, and that the usages and doctrines of that society are their necessary embodiment and expression. We are quite willing to consider other explanations, and to judge them on their merits; but attempts in this direction have hitherto proved egregious failures, nor is there any reason to suppose that their success will be greater in the future. They have, for the most part, been offered by men who stand outside the order of experience with which they are intended to deal, and who are therefore not qualified to deal with it. It is only men inside that order, men who are conscious of their spiritual and moral needs, and who have found those needs satisfied in Christ, who have such knowledge of the facts as enables them to estimate their real significance, and thus to form a correct judgment of their necessary antecedents. And the judgment of such men is practically unanimous with regard to certain

main positions, and has been so for the last eighteen hundred years. Doubtless their conception of these necessary antecedents has varied, and must vary, with the width and intensity of their religious experience. For the man who is only conscious of individual and self-centred needs, and who has found in Christ the satisfaction of those needs, a much less adequate conception of Christ's nature and claim is necessary than for the man who recognises the essentially social character of human life, and to whom, therefore, the idea of individual salvation is unthinkable apart from the salvation of the social organism of which the individual is a member. Such differences of interpretation are relative to differences in moral and spiritual development, and in clearness of intellectual vision. But taking the case of the man in whom this development has proceeded far enough to enable him to find satisfaction of any really religious kind in Christ, and whose intellectual endowments are of the normal and average type, then our statement holds good. Such men are practically unanimous in their agreement that the soul satisfaction which they have achieved is capable of only one explanation, and that, in the main, the explanation offered by the Creeds of the Catholic Church.

Secondly, it places the Christian movement in line with that of modern democracy. The democratic movement, as I have said, is the social expression of the scientific movement. Both alike stand for the rejection of prescriptive authority, the one in the social, the other in the intellectual province. A religion which is to intertwine itself with modern democratic aspirations and activities must concur in this rejection. It must make its appeal from the inside, not from the outside. It must begin with such aspirations and activities themselves; it must show that it is capable of meeting the one, and of guiding the other. It will then get a hearing, and the way will be open to the acceptance of the facts and principles on which its appeal depends. But begin at the other end, begin with the facts and principles and try to enforce their acceptance by argument or authority, and we shall find that we have undertaken an impossible task. The democratic movement is profoundly religious at heart. It cannot permanently maintain itself apart from religious ideals and religious sanctions. But it has to be brought to religious self-consciousness, it has to be brought to recognise its religious needs, before it is capable of accepting Christ as the satisfier of those needs.

Thirdly, it replaces the Christian movement in line with that of Christian thought in pre-scholastic days. The logic of the early Christian Church was essentially that of modern science. It began with facts, and devoted its chief energies to safe-guarding them, and to securing that they should be handed on in their integrity. The Apostles Creed, its accepted statement of foundation Christian truths, is a summary of facts and of facts alone. The doctrinal element hardly appears in it at all; it merely asserts the belief of the community that certain beings exist, that certain events have occurred, that certain institutions have been provided for certain specified ends. These facts it points to as the unchanging and unchangeable material with which it has to deal, just as the natural philosopher or the agriculturist points to the facts of the natural world. It is the duty of the members of the community to relate themselves to them; to relate themselves, in the first place, practically, by finding in them the satisfaction of their practical needs; and then to do so intellectually, by reflecting on the experience thus attained, and discovering the intellectual presuppositions and principles which that experience implies.

It was thus that the doctrinal system of

the Church gradually came into being. The impulse to which it owed its origin was practical rather than intellectual. In later times theologians tended to start with preconceived theories, and to try and force the facts into conformity with them. But this tendency was in early times repudiated as heretical, and indeed the great heresies which the Church successively combated were nearly all of them different expressions of its influence. For the fathers of Catholic theology the great problem was to find the theory or the doctrine which would explain the facts; which would hold them together and relate them to other facts. Take, for instance, the question of the explanation of the vital and ultimate fact of Christian experience; of the conscious experience of Christ's Real Presence in the Body; of the working of His Spirit in each of its lively members. What did this fact imply as to the nature of Christ? As to His relation to the Father God? As to the nature of His Holy Spirit and His relation to both Christ and His Father? This question, eagerly discussed for three centuries, was at length answered in the Nicæan symbol, with its further expansion of the Athanasian Creed. The Trinitarian formula, then elaborated and ever since accepted by the

Church, was no mere metaphysical speculation. It was the expression, so far as human language was adequate to such expression, of the relations of the persons of the Godhead implied in the foundation fact of Christian experience. It was the outcome, not of any metaphysical interest, but of the need for safeguarding this experience, and passing it on intact to succeeding generations.

Then, lastly, the Modernist attitude has for us English Churchmen a special attractiveness. It is closely analogous to that assumed by the English Church in the sixteenth century, and which, though not without difficulty, she has succeeded in maintaining ever since. This has sometimes been described as an attitude of compromise: a middle course between two opposing extremes. But the description is a very inadequate one. In reality the Reformation took a much more radical and sweeping form in England than elsewhere. For it meant a change, not so much in outward organisation and detail doctrinal statement, as in essential method. The Reformation in England, in other words, was the direct product of the New Learning: the only organised embodiment of its protest against the dominance of scholastic logic in the province of theological thought. By throwing herself back on the great dogmas of the Christian

revelation as contained in the Scriptures and the Creeds, and as witnessed to by Catholic antiquity, she freed herself from that network of doctrinal entanglement which Scholasticism had been for centuries sedulously weaving round the Christian spirit. "Go back to the facts; interrogate and interpret them as living things; test all your doctrines by constant reference to them; as experience and insight enable you to see further into their meaning, be ready to modify and restate these doctrines accordingly." These words sum up the characteristic attitude of the English Church in the investigation of theological truth; an attitude, you will notice, completely analogous to that adopted by the Baconian school in the province of physical research. It is true that this attitude is implied rather than openly stated in her authorised documents; it is true also that it is not always consistently maintained there. This was to be expected. No organisation, whether political or ecclesiastical, which is the outcome of living and spontaneous growth, is ever completely consistent with itself. It is only in a sect consciously designed for the propagation of some definite system of doctrine or discipline, or in a state which started its career with a written constitution, that we can look for rigid con-

sistency, and the rigidity there tends to become the precursor of that of death.

But notwithstanding certain subordinate inconsistencies the main attitude of the English Church is, I think, such as I have described. And the fact that it is so is one of our chief grounds for hope in the tremendous task which twentieth-century England has set us. For if we are to face that task with any prospect of successful achievement, we must do so as a united body; we must get rid of the spirit of controversy and partisanship and sectarianism. The prevalence of this spirit means disunity and consequent inefficiency. Those who identify themselves with it incur a heavy responsibility. Only the strongest reasons can justify a man in breaking the unity of the Body, and in thus crippling its organised attack on the powers of evil. Failing such reasons he is a traitor to the cause of Christ, a dangerous opponent of the establishment of His Kingdom here on earth. But controversialists in times gone by believed that such reasons were forthcoming. Some controversialists believe this still. They believe that they are standing for the sacred cause of truth, and it is difficult to see how that belief can be shaken so long as they adopt the scholastic conception of truth, and identify it with formal

accuracy of doctrinal statement and definition. This, however, is not the conception of truth which the English Church stands for. About the great facts of revelation she speaks with no uncertain voice; she makes their honest acceptance a necessary condition of membership. But with regard to the doctrinal deductions from these facts her attitude is very different. We look in vain through the Prayer Book for those precise definitions and clear-cut statements which we find in the theological manuals of Rome or Geneva. Even when definitions are given they are expressed in terms which hinder but little the play of reasonable investigation. Within the wide limits of the Catholic Creeds she leaves her members that freedom of thought and expression without which intelligent progress is impossible.

The practical importance of these considerations is so great and so far-reaching that I feel justified in emphasising them, even at the risk of reiteration. We all want unity. The best Churchmen of all shades of opinion want to come together, and to work together with each other and with Christ for the establishment of His Kingdom. But they feel, and rightly feel, that unity can be purchased at too high a price. They feel, and rightly feel, that common action which

can only be maintained by ignoring points of vital difference carries with it slender guarantees of permanency or efficiency. It is at best a very imperfect thing; at worst a mere sham and make-believe. But if what I have said as to the attitude of the English Church is true, and I believe that it is true, then for those who understand and have identified themselves with this attitude such unity is quite compatible with great differences of doctrinal belief and statement. Doctrines are not the essential and permanent factors in belief. They represent men's efforts to interpret the facts of the historical revelation of Christ and to relate them to their own religious needs. These must, and ought to, vary from man to man and from age to age. They must vary, for each man's, and each age's experiences and needs and points of view are different. They ought to vary, for every real fact is the converging point of an infinite number of relations, all of which must be brought into consciousness before complete knowledge of its meaning is attained. A single human mind, however well endowed, can never attain this knowledge; God and God alone possesses it in its fulness. But the corporate mind of the Church, as it grows with her growth, advances towards it, and it does so

because, and just so far as, into it is poured a constant stream of contributions from those of her members who have faced the facts for themselves, and have honestly tried to understand and interpret them. Such contributions are of necessity partial; they may at first sight seem mutually exclusive or antagonistic, but they are never really so if they are the outcome of honest and dutiful effort. Let them once pass into the Church's mind, and they become merged into a higher unity in which their contradictions are resolved, and their partialities are seen to be complementary to each other.

It is necessary before I conclude to add some words of qualification; otherwise I may run the risk of conveying a wrong impression by what I have said. We must distinguish between the Modernist attitude, and those who are sometimes regarded as the typical exponents of that attitude. Modernism is one thing; Modernists are quite another. It is quite possible to accept fully the Modernist logic and to be in complete sympathy with the Modernist tendency and point of view, and at the same time to repudiate emphatically the teaching of certain conspicuous Modernists, and to repudiate it, moreover, on the ground that it is inconsistent with the professed principles from which they start.

Take a crucial instance. Take the fact of the Resurrection. Is the fact historically true, or is it not? Was St Paul right or was he wrong when he declared that if Christ did not rise from the dead his preaching was vain, and the hope of his hearers also vain? It is understating the case to say that certain writers of the Modernist school evade this question. They make distinctions between real history and ideal history, between phenomenal history and prophetic history, which are hardly intelligible to the ordinary man. When he asks the plain question—"Did the Resurrection actually take place, or did it not?" he fails to get a plain answer. But there is no doubt that the impression left upon his mind is that these writers do not believe that it actually did take place; or, at any rate, that they do not regard it as a matter of crucial importance whether it actually took place or not. Now it is at this point that we must join issue in the most strenuous manner. The actual historical occurrence of the Resurrection *is* a matter of crucial importance. St Paul was quite justified in declaring that its denial means the uprooting of the very foundations of the whole Christian way of life.

It is quite true to say that faith is, in its

essence, a supernatural attainment; that no external evidences can produce it. It is quite true to say that it is the necessary and instinctive response of the moral and spiritual forces of man's nature to God revealed in Christ. But these forces must be free to act. The recognition of light by the eye is an instinctive and necessary act, bringing its own evidence with it; but that act cannot take place if the eye is closed, or if a cloud is interposed between it and its true object.

The question, then, how soul freedom is to be attained, is one of quite essential and fundamental importance. How is the soul eye to be opened? How are the clouds which hide from it the face of God in Christ to be removed? And this question, it seems to me, cannot be answered save in the terms of a historical revelation duly accredited and authenticated. For the moral and spiritual forces of man's nature are not free to act so long as he is embarrassed by the fear that his personal identity may come to an end at the hour of physical death. Till this fear is removed it is vain to present to him an ideal of life which needs for its realisation, not a few years of precarious existence, but an assured eternity of uninterrupted development. It is mere mockery to offer him the satisfaction of his ultimate soul need, if that satisfaction is

dependent on physical conditions which seem to be subject to the law of inevitable decay and death. Personal existence, as we know it, is inextricably involved in bodily existence, and the whole weight of external evidence is against the permanence of the latter. This evidence indeed is not conclusive; there is no reason in the nature of things why personal identity should not survive physical death; but if history presents no well authenticated instance of its survival, the balance of probability lies against it. This balance must be redressed before our souls are left free to act. Some instance of its survival must be forthcoming, and this must be supported by evidence capable of standing the tests which we apply in the examination of any historical event. It is, of course, unreasonable to demand that such evidence should be conclusive. Historical evidence —evidence, that is, which depends upon the testimony of human witnesses, whether living or dead—cannot from its nature be conclusive. There is always the possibility that the witnesses were mistaken, or deluded, or insincere, or that the record of their evidence has been tampered with. But we do not for these reasons reject all historical evidence, and declare that the writing of true history is an impossible task,

We recognise that evidence of a certain kind, evidence which will stand certain tests and certain methods of investigation, may be accepted as sufficiently strong to justify us in accepting it and acting upon it. All that we can reasonably demand is that the evidence for this particular event shall be of such a character. But this demand must be satisfied before we can accept it, and act upon it.

I fail, then, to see any method of escape from the dilemma with which the apostle presents us. If Christ did not actually rise from the grave, if no substantial evidence is forthcoming as to the maintenance of His personal identity after death, then we have nothing to place against the chain of external witness which binds us to the presumption that personal existence does not survive death; that the conditions on which, so far as we know, such existence depends are fatally interrupted then. Of course there is still a possibility of its survival. There is still a greater possibility, supported by evidence of a different kind, of the continuance of some kind of spiritual existence after death. We have in our own nature witnesses of immortality whose voice no external evidence or lack of external evidence can silence. But what man craves for is the immortality

of his own personal life—the continued existence of himself as himself. The hope, nay, even the certainty, that intertwined in his nature there is some subtle spiritual essence which cannot die, does not satisfy this craving. But the whole appeal and claim of Christianity, the whole ideal of life which it places before us, assumes its satisfaction. It appeals to man in his completeness, it places an ideal of complete manhood before him, it speaks to him of a destiny in which this manhood will be achieved, and it calls him to embark upon a line of effort and development which at every point is relative to this achievement. Such an ideal is but a sentimental dream, such an appeal and such a claim remain outside the forces which mould practical conduct and practical achievement, unless the assumption from which they start is justified by sufficient evidence. The testimony of external experience must be met on its own ground. The chain of evidence derived from this experience must be broken. It is sufficient that it should be broken at a single point. Given one well-authenticated instance of the survival of personal identity after death, and we are made spiritually free. Apart from such an instance we remain still tied and bound. Personal union with God, the ultimate craving of

the human soul, the primal instinct from which all religion starts, is a delusive aspiration unless we have some guarantee of the permanence of personality. But self-consciousness is of the essence of personality, and self-consciousness, so far as we know it, is dependent on feeling, and feeling is a function of a sensitive organism, of a body, as we call it. A religion, then, which does not include the doctrine of a bodily resurrection among the main articles of its Creed, and which does not justify belief in this doctrine by sufficient evidence, fails to satisfy man's ultimate religious need. Confronted with such a religion two alternatives are open. The man may accept it and sedulously try to eliminate from his religious need all those elements which lie outside its range of satisfaction. This is what the consistent Buddhist does. Finding no response in his religion to his demand for personal union with God, he places before him as the goal of his religious development a union of some non-personal kind, and as a preparation for this he proceeds to divest his life, so far as he can, of all the attributes of personality—of feeling, and desire, and self-conscious thought.

Or, on the other hand, the man may reject it, and, disregarding the religious need altogether, may throw himself back on the lower but still

primary needs of his nature, and try to content himself with their satisfaction. If death means the cessation of all satisfaction in any sense in which it is worth attainment, why should he not gain as much and as varied satisfaction as he can before death comes? Why should he not eat, drink, and be merry, if to-morrow he is bound to die?

This is a crucial instance; but the same kind of considerations hold good with regard to all the main facts of the Christian revelation. Unless these are real facts which have actually occurred, facts supported by adequate historical evidence, facts capable of standing the test of strict historical criticism, the whole Christian system of life falls to pieces, as a house falls which has been built without foundations. The logic of Modernism we fully accept—the logic which insists on beginning with facts and testing all our theories and doctrines by constant reference to them. But the facts must be there if this logic is to be applied. The facts not merely of man's ultimate religious needs, but also the facts which Christianity places over against them as the source and centre of their satisfaction. There is no evading this claim, and to the plain man the methods of dealing with it adopted by certain Modernists are nothing

but elaborate evasions. What they call ideal history is merely another name for the narration of events which have never occurred, or which, at any rate, may never have occurred. History of this kind provides us with no real facts to work upon: it leaves the logic of Modernism without the material it requires, and the existence of which it presupposes. By a roundabout way it brings us back to the very intellectual position which Modernism starts by repudiating. It invites us to begin anew the futile attempt of regulating our conduct, and developing our knowledge, in accordance with self-formed theories of what ought to be, rather than along the lines of principles derived from a careful observation of what actually is or has been. When a prominent Ultramontane declared that an appeal to history was treason against the Catholic Church, his assertion was regarded as the expression of the most extreme form of scholastic obscurantism. But his intellectual attitude differed in no essential respect from that of men who would have us direct our lives in accordance with principles, and in submission to ordinances and institutions which, while claiming to have a historical origin, cannot, they tell us, make that claim good at the bar of real historical evidence.

IV

THE CHRIST OF THE GOSPELS

Those of us whose work lies in the great cities feel very anxious about the rift which seems to be opening out between the Church and many of the most active and progressive men there. I do not mean that there is much open hostility. On the contrary, many of us clergy, for instance, are on most friendly terms with the leaders of the chief philanthropic and social movements. They are quite willing to discuss their projects with us, and to accept any aid that we may be able to give in carrying them through. But, as a rule, they will only do so on their own terms, not on ours. They often display a friendly tolerance for the special activities with which we are identified; they will even assure us that they quite recognise them as having a considerable value of their own. But it is a value which belongs to quite a different department of thought and conduct from that with which they are primarily concerned, and a department

which, from their point of view, is evidently of subordinate importance.

Take an illustration. Why is it that the repeated attacks on the High Church Clergy have hitherto not merely failed, but have greatly strengthened their position and influence? Why is it that, so far as one can judge, similar results are likely to follow from similar attacks in the future; that no one but a fanatic can believe that it is possible to suppress what is called the High Church Movement by disciplinary or legislative means? It is not that the mass of Englishmen have much sympathy with High Church doctrines and practices—their traditional sympathies, indeed, are rather of an opposite kind. But what the ordinary Englishman will say is something like this: "Here are a number of men who are doing really good work; who are living devoted and unselfish lives; who are willing to spend and be spent for others; who have been the means of bringing brightness and self-respect and self-control into many lives which, but for them, would have been despairing or degraded. Their beliefs and their ritual practices are no concern of ours; we do not understand them, or, so far as we do understand them, we do not agree with them. But, however that may be, we cannot stand by

and see them harassed and crippled at the bidding of people whose social services cannot be compared with theirs, merely because their theological views happen to be distasteful to them. Theological views don't really matter. What does matter is good work, and we cannot have men who are doing good work seriously interfered with whatever their theological views may be."

"Theological views do not matter." That is the attitude, the prevalence of which is giving us real concern; for it implies, you will notice, that those who adopt it no longer look to Christianity for their ideals and inspirations and principles. They may have a traditional respect for Christian institutions and usages, but their real interests must lie outside the region of direct and consciously recognised Christian influence. They are facing the real issues of life, and trying to meet its real claims, not as Christians, not as men who really believe that in Christ all fulness dwells, and that in His precepts and example, rightly interpreted and applied, they can find the solution of the different problems with which they are confronted. If they did believe this, theology would matter to them, and matter intensely, for what is theology but this interpretation and application thought out by scientific

methods and arranged in a scientific form? This or that system of theology they might, indeed, reject. But once admit the ultimate Christian claim, and a system of some kind becomes a necessity; something which no man can do without who wishes to live an intelligent and responsible life. It is, then, the implicit rejection of this ultimate claim which is troubling us: the fact that some men consciously, many more unconsciously, are looking elsewhere than to Christianity for their standards and methods of attainment; that while we call ourselves a Christian nation, some of our most potent social and national movements are developing independently of Christian influences and ideals, and must, as they become conscious of their trend, sooner or later reach a point at which an open breach with the whole Christian conception of life becomes inevitable.

It is a situation which cannot be dealt with by cheery platitudes about the essentially religious character of the English people, or by spasmodic attempts to revive religious interest through emotional or devotional expedients. What we have to recognise is, that though by tradition and disposition the Anglo-Saxon race is religiously inclined, that race is now in the grip of great economic and social forces which are hurrying it,

almost against its will, in the direction of a purely materialistic conception of life. That is the point which needs emphatic and reiterated statement. It is no longer mere lethargy and indifference with which we have to deal; it is with an ideal which claims not merely to displace the Christian ideal, but to replace it by another essentially incongruous to it. We have not yet come to the parting of the ways, but we are rapidly nearing it. It behoves us Christians, while we still possess a certain traditional advantage, to examine carefully the situation with which we have to deal; to see, if we can, why our claim fails to get an adequate response; and if the failure is due to some fault in our way of interpreting and presenting it, to see to it that we lose no time in making that fault good. It is in this connection that I wish to suggest one explanation of the attitude to which I have referred, which, though by no means its complete explanation, is, I think, valid so far as it goes.

We are accustomed to say that the last century has been one of unprecedented progress so far as our Western civilisations are concerned. The statement is true; but I would have us notice that our progress has been chiefly in the direction of organising and systematising our different intellectual and industrial and political

activities. We have thus succeeded in constructing an elaborate and carefully adjusted mechanism of social life which, if it worked properly, would seem to be capable of producing far-reaching and beneficent results. But the trouble is that it is not working properly, and is not achieving these results. By the organisation of our scientific knowledge we are wringing the means of subsistence from Nature in prodigal abundance, but still men and women are dying of want and starvation in our midst. By the organisation of our commerce we have covered the whole earth with a living network of intercommunication and exchange, but the chief gains of commerce go to the few; the many are condemned to lives of increasing drudgery and dullness. By the organisation of our system of Government we have secured to every citizen equality of political rights; but the end to which such rights are relative, the far greater boon of equality of social opportunities, still remains a dream of the far-off future. By the organisation of our system of education we have put intellectual training within the reach of all; but the chief result so far has been to make many who receive this training conscious of needs which they cannot satisfy. By the organisation of the forces of capital and labour we have put

two opposing armies in the field, which seem to be preparing for a struggle that may bring social disaster in its train.

The machinery is there, a marvel of delicate contrivance. But it is not working properly; and it is not working properly because men are not forthcoming who can guide and control it, and direct it to its proper ends. That is the great need of the present age—the need of leaders; of strong, far-seeing, resourceful men, who can interpret its deepest aspirations and point the way to their attainment. On all sides we hear the cry: "Who will show us any good? Where can we find the man, or race of men, who can understand and control all this elaborate mechanism which we have contrived, and guide it along the paths of true progress?"

We Christians declare that Christ, and Christ alone, can do this thing—that His character and His power reproduced in living men are what the age needs. But we speak to a large extent to deaf ears. Men shake their heads and give little heed to what we say. "Your Christ," they tell us, "has been tried and found wanting. He was primarily and essentially a sufferer. He looked out on the world through eyes dimmed with sorrow. He taught men

how to endure the ills of life, inspired by the hope of a heaven beyond the grave, and so long as those ills were regarded as inevitable His words received a hearing. But the strongest men of this age do not regard them thus. They do not want to be taught how to suffer and to die; they want to know how to conquer and to live. We have already conquered many ills which our forefathers bowed to as inevitable; ills social, and physical, and political. We have already attained to an order of life much fuller and richer than theirs, and the progress we have made is but a presage of greater and more rapid progress in the future. The breath of a new age is inspiring us. We seem to be on the threshold of an era when the achievements of the past will come to their full fruition and yield their full results of well-being and happiness. We are but waiting for a real Christ who will lead us across that threshold and show us how to appropriate the treasures beyond it. But your Christ cannot do this for us, nor is the ideal of manhood presented by Him suited to our requirements. Not only is it unattainable by the mass of men, but its attainment by them would not be desirable. For the characteristic Christian graces are passive and pathological—the virtues of weak and despondent men and

women, while our primary need is a supply of strong, healthy, active men, full of zest and courage and hope. These the Christian Church cannot produce so long as she is true to her own principles. Our inherited inclinations are on her side, her principles and her practices come to us intertwined with many of the sweetest memories of our early years. But in the face of these we are being driven into an attitude of indifference or hostility to her claims. Of indifference so long as only the sorrowful and sentimental, the weaklings who do not matter, submit to them; of hostility if, by attracting strong men to her allegiance, she withdraws them from the arena of healthy effort, and uses their strength to impede rather than to accelerate social progress."

Such, in briefest outline, is the attitude with which we are increasingly confronted. Those who have adopted it do not often as yet define it in explicit terms—many of them, indeed, are hardly conscious that they have adopted it, and would, if pressed, repudiate it. But verbal denials do not alter facts, and the actual facts with which we have to deal, to my mind, admit of no other explanation. What reply can we Christians make to a criticism so fundamental and far-reaching?

In the first place, then, we must fully admit that the criticism to which I have referred holds good so far as the Christ of much popular religious teaching and preaching is concerned; the Christ of our sentimental hymns, of our revival services, of our introspective devotions. It must be admitted, further, that this interpretation of Christ's character finds much support in traditional Christian art, and in the main stream of Christian theology since, at any rate, the time of St Augustine. The Christ whose distinctive function was to die for the sins of mankind; the Christ whose whole character and claim are interpreted in the context of the master conceptions of sacrifice and atonement; the Christ whose highest symbolical representation is to be found in the figure of a dead man hanging on a Cross; such a Christ is, and must be, primarily and essentially a sufferer, a man of sorrows, one whose characteristic grace was resignation, whose characteristic lesson to men was the lesson how to endure the ills interwoven with the texture of life here on earth, and how, through this endurance, to fit themselves for participation in a happier life in the world to come. All this must be admitted, and it must be admitted, further, that if such an interpretation is true and adequate there is

a rift not to be bridged over between the Christian conception of life and that which lies behind some of the most virile and progressive social movements of the present day. It does not follow that the Christian conception is wrong. It may be that the whole trend of modern social progress is wrong, and that it is our duty as Christians to detach ourselves from it, or to throw ourselves against it. That is a further point; all I wish to insist on now is that the two conceptions are essentially incongruous with each other, and that it is a mere waste of time to try and reconcile them. But is this interpretation true and adequate? That is the crucial question to which many of us are seeking for an answer. Let me try to indicate the lines along which we are making this attempt.

In the preceding chapters I have tried to outline what seems to me the true principle of theological investigation and interpretation. It is the principle that though the historical facts of the Christian revelation are immutable, a similar claim cannot be made on behalf of the doctrinal deductions from these facts. Each generation of Christians must to some extent draw these for themselves. It must do so, indeed, with reverence and care, and with full

regard to the interpretations of previous ages. These must be taken up and included in the higher synthesis. But the higher synthesis itself is a necessary sign and outcome of living and progressive Christian thought.

Now this principle holds good not merely in the province of speculative and dogmatic theology; it holds equally good in that of practical theology. It is not merely legitimate for each generation of Christians to interpret the Christ character anew for itself; it is bound to do so if it is to be true to the developing life of the Christian community, and to the experiences which it has inherited from preceding generations. Thus, though the Christ of the Gospels is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, the interpretation of His character and claim given by a Christian of the twentieth century must of necessity be different from that given by one who lived in mediæval times, just as this in turn must be different from that of the Primitive Church. Doubtless the difference should not be one of fundamental contradiction; the later interpretations should be connected with the earlier by a process of continuous organic growth. But the successive stages of that growth may be as different from one another in external form and proportion of parts as the acorn is from the sapling which

springs from it, or as the sapling is from the full-grown oak. That is the principle. Let me try now to apply it to the question before us.

The Gospel of Christ is a gospel of peace. But its immediate effect was to bring to the world, not peace, but a sword. It grappled at once in a life-and-death conflict with the old Roman civilisation. It emerged victorious from that struggle, but only to find itself engaged in a still more desperate one. It had to face the hordes of hardy heathens who had devastated the Empire, and to establish its supremacy over them. It had to tame them, and to teach them, and to discipline them, and gradually to produce from them a new social order embodying its own principles and ideals. The birth throes of this order lasted for many centuries. It was only very slowly that right came to be recognised as superior to might; only very slowly that the principles of justice and humanity were consciously accepted and expressed in laws and customs and institutions. To men living during that period the outlook must have appeared very dark so far as this world was concerned. The vision of the Kingdom still remained clear to the eye of faith and hope, but its establishment here on earth must have seemed well-nigh hopeless. And so the more

reflective and devout minds tended to interpret Christianity almost exclusively as a religion of otherworldliness. Their real interests lay in the life beyond the grave. This life was to them but a painful preparation for the life to come. It is true, indeed, that this was not the interpretation which lay behind many of the most potent forms of Christian activity. The men who were actively engaged in impressing the Christian ideal on the nascent civilisation of the times, the great popes and ecclesiastical statesmen, the missionaries, the teachers, the powerful monastic orders, with their widespread economical and industrial interests, the army of hard-working secular clergy, the men of action and affairs, such men may have used the phraseology of this interpretation in their devotions, and may have given their intellectual adhesion to the theological system based upon it, but they did not act upon it when they came to face the actual claims of life. They dealt with these claims not as adherents of an otherworldly cult, but as men whose mission it was to establish Christ's supremacy here in this world. They ruled, they organised, they taught, they disciplined; they held the reins of civil government in almost every European State; they were the great legislators and administrators

of their times; it was mainly through their means, and through the influence exercised by them, that laws were formulated, and rights acknowledged, and liberties safeguarded. Under their leadership the Church remained true to the mission which had been entrusted to her by her Founder, the mission of gradually transforming the kingdoms of this world into the Kingdom of God.

But with the thinkers and students the case was different. Driven by the turbulence of the times into lives of seclusion, they formed artificial societies of their own, which depended for their maintenance on their isolation from the outer world. They did splendid work. They kept alive the tradition of learning; they maintained a high standard of devotion and worship; for a long time, at any rate, they presented to a violent and licentious age an invaluable example of self-denial and self-control. But the atmosphere of seclusion dominated their thought and dictated the lines of its development. They had forsaken the world because the world was hopelessly evil. They had concentrated themselves on the other world because in it alone could rest and satisfaction be attained. And so Christianity became to them primarily and almost exclusively the

means of entrance into that world. They turned to Christ for the satisfaction of their special needs, and they concentrated on those aspects of His Person and His work which were relative to that satisfaction.

And the Christ so conceived and so interpreted met the popular religious needs of the times. Religious-minded men in the outer world found themselves for the most part living in an atmosphere charged with violent and anarchic passions; the society which surrounded them and the inner realm of their own souls seemed to be dominated by the forces of sensuality and selfishness; the still, small voice of righteousness seemed to be drowned in the Babel cries of lust and tyranny and inhumanity; the hope of social regeneration and of personal satisfaction seemed to be alike futile, so far as this world was concerned. So it was to another world that their thoughts and aspirations also naturally turned. The stress of their religious efforts must be directed to freeing themselves from the contaminations of their earthly existence. Its sorrows and sufferings were part of its essential texture; they could not be eliminated, they must be endured, and by resigned endurance they might be made the means of that purification without which they could not hope to share in the happiness of the

life to come. Men so disposed, whether in or out of the cloister, looked for a religion of redemption, a religion which would offer them the means of escape from sin, a religion which would console them in their sorrows, and enable them to endure them with resignation. They found the satisfaction of their needs in Christ, and they interpreted His life and character almost exclusively in the context of this satisfaction.

It was a completely legitimate interpretation; it was the interpretation rendered almost inevitable by the circumstances of the times. Each man, and each generation of men, must approach Christ with the consciousness of need, and of his own special and peculiar need. This is the impelling motive which forces him thither, and his instinctive recognition of Christ's response forms the bedrock of assured experience on which the whole fabric of His religious life is built up. This process is not merely legitimate, it is the only process by which personal conviction can be attained, and the whole progress of the Christian movement in every age depends upon the diffusion and depth of such conviction, upon the number and the activity of the leaven centres of the Christ life. But it is, and must be, essentially a personal process. An

interpretation of Christ accepted merely on the authority of others does not become a vital religious force in a man's life till he has tested it for himself by bringing it into relation to his own personal religious needs. The testimony of others is a sufficient proof that there are needs in human nature to which this interpretation is relative, and if these others are living under the same social conditions as himself, it is probable that these are the needs of which he himself is chiefly conscious, and that he will find in the current interpretation the satisfaction which he craves. But this probability becomes less when the testimony is that of a bygone age. It is by no means to be rejected for that reason. On the contrary, so far as it has received the official imprimatur of the Christian community in that age, it has become part of the common traditional heritage, and the authorised doctrines and practices in which it has found expression must be taken up and assimilated in the community's intellectual and spiritual growth. But they must not be allowed to cripple or curtail that growth. As the experience of the community widens, and with it that of its individual members, other needs emerge into consciousness and often assert their claims in priority to the old needs. It is not

that the old needs are not there. Their previous recognition by the community guarantees that they belong to the essential texture of human life. But they no longer cover the field of human experience; they no longer, it may be, occupy the foremost place there. If religious development is to proceed, the new needs must be recognised. They must be brought to Christ and their satisfaction must be found in Him. And the fuller interpretation of His Person which their satisfaction implies, must not be embarrassed by the consideration that it differs in richness and in proportion of parts from that of some former age. Thus we of the twentieth century are free to interpret Christ for ourselves. We are not merely free to do so; we are bound to do so if our union with Him is a living and, therefore, a growing thing. Because men of the mediæval age dwelt almost exclusively on the redemptive aspect of His mission; because they conceived Him almost exclusively as a sufferer, and a sin- and sorrow-bearer; it does not follow that we must conceive Him thus. We must go back for ourselves to the facts of His life-story, and place against them the facts of our own wider and deeper experience. Just so far as these two sets of facts respond to each other shall we find in Him the completion

of our manhood, and the satisfaction of its desire.

Looking, then, at the Christ of the Gospels through twentieth-century eyes, what is the picture which rises up before us? Certainly He did not give those with whom He came in contact from day to day the impression of predominant sadness. To His immediate followers He was bound by ties of closest sympathy and affection. He was evidently to them a kind, genial, considerate, dependable friend and leader. Children were attracted to Him, as they are never attracted by people of detached and austere temperament. His constant use of illustrations from the world of nature show how closely He observed its processes, and the keen delight this observation brought to Him. He was equally at home in the houses of the rich and of the poor, and was frequently to be found at their social gatherings and entertainments: at a wedding feast here, at a quiet family party there, at a stately banquet in another place. And the people He met there were plainly at their ease with Him. The aristocratic Pharisees and wealthy publicans who were His hosts from time to time had little sympathy with His religious and social views. Most of them probably regarded those views as eccentric, if

not dangerous. They asked Him to their feasts for the same reason that they would ask any well-bred and interesting guest: because they thought that His presence would add to the amenity of the occasion. Indeed, so marked were His sociable tendencies and predilections that His opponents taunted Him with them, and pointed to Him derisively as a mere *bon vivant* and boon companion, a glutton and wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners.

There is, of course, the other side of the picture: the side represented by the death-struggle with the Tempter; by the tears at Lazarus's grave; by the lamentation over Jerusalem; by the agony in the garden, and its sequel on the Cross. But balance incident against incident, and it is impossible, I think, to say that the master note of the life was sorrow and suffering. Sorrow and suffering are indeed there—often violent and acute—but joy is also there, and no less prominent. From neither point of view can we describe the Gospel Christ in His completeness. It is as untrue to describe His earthly life as one of predominant sorrow, as it would be to describe it as one of predominant joy. Joy and sorrow intertwine and intermingle at every stage; light succeeds shade and shade light, as day succeeds night and night day.

But more than this. As we study the life more closely, we shall find that its full interpretation must be looked for at a deeper level. We shall find that neither joy nor sorrow seem to touch more than its surface; that He was strangely independent of both; that His real self was no more affected by their incidence than is a traveller by the sights and sounds of a country through which he is passing; that even in His moments of highest exaltation or deepest depression He never loses His mental poise and balance; that His inner serenity remains unruffled, the consistency of His life's progress undisturbed. We cannot fully describe the Christ of the Gospels in terms either of joy or sorrow, or in a combination of both. Some deeper principle was at work in His life to which His sensitive experiences were quite subordinate, and in comparison with which their influence was almost negligible.

What was this principle? Let us begin with the recorded facts, and with the estimate formed of them by those who had first-hand knowledge of them. What was the leading impression conveyed by Christ to those with whom He came into daily contact during His life here on earth?

A number of converging considerations seem

to me to indicate the true answer to this question. It will be sufficient for my purpose to summarise some of the chief of them.

In the first place, then, it is to be noticed how prominently the word "power" figures in the New Testament references to Christ's person and work. "The multitude glorified God, who had given such power unto men," says St Matthew; "The Kingdom of God comes with power," says St Mark; "The word was with power," says St Luke. "Thou hast given Him power over all flesh," says St John, and the same word is used again and again in similar connections by St Paul, and in the Book of Revelation. The New Testament writers evidently regarded this attribute of power as an essential attribute of the Christ character, and a whole series of incidents narrated in the Gospel story seem to point in the same direction. See Him at the beginning of His ministry approaching men in the midst of their ordinary occupations, and calling them to follow Him, and see them at once responding to His call and abandoning all and following Him; see Him facing the Pharisees in their pride; see Him driving the traders from the Temple; listen to the people declaring, "This man speaks with authority"; notice how even His opponents

approach Him and address Him with marked respect; notice how even in the moment of His betrayal those who had come to seize Him fall backward when He confronts them; watch Him as He stands before Pilate and answers him with the quiet dignity of a king; let scene after scene pass before our eyes and we cannot fail to recognise that this is so. It is no grief-laden ascetic that we see there; it is a man full of the strength and resource of manhood, one conscious of His right to lead, and whose right others instinctively acknowledged.

And this impression deepens as we look more closely and notice how He possesses all the attributes of moral and intellectual power. How sane and healthy and self-possessed He always is; how He never loses His equanimity and self-control. And how intellectually powerful He also is, showing His power in this respect not merely by an accuracy and width of knowledge which astonished the learned men of His time, but still more by the capacity for getting at once at the heart of a subject, for seeing at once what matters and what does not, for using arguments with the ease and playfulness which none but an intellectual master can attain to. And the impression deepens still more when we notice how lavish He is of His sympathy and His teaching

how He never poses, never waits for a great audience or opportunity, but gives freely of the treasures of His heart and mind to all who ask for them, and are able to receive them, however lowly in station or repute, however faint-hearted in desire for truth, however disgraceful in their antecedents, however despised by the respectable and righteous.

That, then, is the Christ of the Gospels as we see Him through twentieth-century eyes. We see One who passes across the stage of life clothed in the panoply of regal power: an intellectual and moral leader of men: a wise, strong Master whom men could not but respect, even when they refused obedience. One who could meet the opposition of the learned with their own weapons: One whose temptations and sufferings were those which come to vigorous manhood: One who could turn defeat into victory, and through the apparent failure of the Cross, could draw men to His allegiance who during His life had remained obdurate to His influence. It is this Christ whom we point to as the Leader whom the age is asking for. It is His life and power reproduced in faithful men which we claim can carry human progress forward, till it consummates itself in the establishment of His Kingdom here on earth.

What, then, was the ultimate principle of that life—the secret of that power? On the answer to this question depends intimately the vindication of our claim.

V

"A MAN UNDER AUTHORITY"

WHAT was the ultimate principle of Christ's life? What principle will explain the facts by holding them together as one consistent whole? The law of suffering and self-sacrifice does not meet the requirements of the case; it explains some facts, but it leaves others unexplained. The law of glad sympathy with man and nature is for the same reason equally inadequate. Both laws find their expression in His life, but neither covers its whole range. There must be some deeper and more fundamental law at work, in the unity of which these partial and apparently antagonistic principles find their reconciliation. Can we discover what that law is?

There is an incident mentioned by St Luke which indicates the direction in which we may look for an answer to this question. A soldier officer came to Christ and pleaded on behalf of a servant of his who was lying ill in his house. Christ replied that He would come and heal

him. But the centurion did not think this at all necessary or fitting. "I am not worthy," he said, "that thou shouldest come under my roof, but speak the word only and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to this man go and he goeth, and to another come and he cometh, and to my servant do this and he doeth it." Our Lord turned to His disciples and said: "Verily, I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel," and then turning again to the centurion, He told him that his request had been granted, and that his servant was healed.

Now notice the significance of these words of Christ. The word faith in the New Testament by no means stands for credulity, for readiness to accept statements without sufficient evidence of their truth. The moral and spiritual truths apprehended by faith are supported by evidence of their own, evidence quite as cogent and convincing as that demanded by the most rigid scientific demonstration. It is by his capacity for recognising and appreciating this evidence that the man of faith is primarily distinguished. He is primarily a man of spiritual and moral sensitiveness; a man who instinctively responds to a great ideal when it is presented to him;

a man who instinctively penetrates beneath the surface experiences of life, and comes face to face with the moral and spiritual laws which underlie and direct them. This power of spiritual sensitiveness, of clearness of spiritual vision, is of the essence of faith. It does not exhaust its content. Faith in the New Testament stands for more than the seeing eye and the hearing ear; it also includes the willing hand. But the hand cannot will, it lacks motive and direction, unless the eye sees and the ear hears.

When, then, Christ used the words to which I have referred, He commended the centurion as a man who displayed spiritual sensitiveness in a conspicuous degree; one who had penetrated deeper into the secret of His life than any even of His compatriots had done. In the words "a man under authority" He finds an echo of a profound strain of His own personal consciousness. He places His emphatic imprimatur on this description of His character. He declares it to be the truest and most adequate description which had hitherto been offered.

The principle of authority, of unquestioning obedience to a Higher Power — is this the ultimate principle we are seeking for? Is it consistent with the facts? Does it hold them together and enable us to view them as one

connected and consistent whole? Let me try to indicate some of the considerations which seem to make for an affirmative answer to these questions.

In the first place, then, it certainly is in accordance with Christ's revelations of His own inner experience. He seldom made such self-revelations; He seldom laid bare the foundations of His life even to His most intimate associates. But when He did so the same note is always struck. "For this purpose am I sent," He declares in one place; "I came not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me," in another. Even at the very beginning of His earthly career this consciousness seems to have dominated Him. "Did ye not know," He says to His anxious parents, "that I must be about My Father's business?" His recognition of mission, of being under authority, of having been sent to do a pre-ordained work, is already so vivid and intense that He is surprised when His parents use words which suggest even the possibility of any other claim interfering with this claim. And when that career was nearing its climax, when in the Garden of Gethsemane He faces the tragedy in which it is to close, though the flesh shrinks from the ordeal, though it writhes in the agony of anticipation and pleads

piteously for deliverance, this is but a passing incident, but a surface storm on His life's stream; the stream itself goes forward, unchecked and unabated. "Father, if it be possible let this cup pass from Me: yet not My will but Thine be done." Only now and again does Christ give us a glimpse of the inmost sanctuary of His soul; but when He does so, it is to the serene atmosphere of authoritative law that He introduces us.

In the second place, it explains that marked characteristic of His life to which I have already referred—His independence of pain and pleasure, His comparative indifference to both. This, as I have pointed out, cannot be attributed to any lack of sensibility; on the contrary, everything goes to show that His sensibility was developed in an exceptional degree. But it becomes quite intelligible on the assumption that He was living on a level of life at which sensitive experiences sank into a position of subordinate and quite negligible importance: transient things which came and went, but whose incidence did not affect the real events which were being enacted there. An illustration may help to make clear what I mean. Take the case of a soldier engaged in an active and arduous campaign. He does his work, he takes his

risks, because it is his duty to do so. He does not seek hardships or dangers for their own sake, he does not regard them as in any sense good or desirable things; on the contrary, he regards them as bad and undesirable. But if they come in the line of his duty he takes them as a matter of course, and undergoes them and faces them without a murmur. If, however, now and again during the campaign good food and comfortable quarters and safe surroundings are offered to him, he by no means refuses to take advantage of them, and enjoy them to the full. He is careful, indeed, to avoid the risk of allowing such enjoyment to weaken his capacity for facing the arduous work which still awaits him. But subject to this precaution it is quite consistent with his duty as a soldier to accept whatever good things come in his way; he does his work all the better if the exigencies of the warfare in which he is engaged allow him occasional opportunities of recreation and refreshment. This illustration is capable of general application. The man under God's authority, the man who lives in the constant consciousness that his steps are guided by a Higher Power towards a predestined goal, can bear the sorrows and disappointments of life with equanimity, and enjoy its amenities without misgiving. It is a matter

of comparative indifference to him whether he is led through dark valleys or green pastures; these are to him but incidents of his journey, bye-products of experience which come and go, but which lie outside the line of its essential continuity.

In the third place, it helps us to understand Christ's unique personal influence and power of leadership. It is a truism of every-day experience that the man who wishes to wield authority must himself be under authority; that if he is to secure the obedience of others he must himself be accustomed to obey. Take another simple illustration. Take the case of a boy brought up by a weak mother or a careless and indulgent father, petted, and pampered, and allowed to have his own way. The boy grows up to manhood, but unless the necessary training and discipline have been supplied by some other means, it will in all probability be a weak and ineffective manhood. If circumstances place him in a position of authority he may bully and domineer, but he is not likely to be able to command, to secure personal loyalty and obedience. But let the boy be brought up under different conditions. Let him be sent into the Navy, for instance, and there taught the lesson of immediate and un-

questioning obedience, till it has become a fixed habit of his life, and then see how different the result will be. We expect him to emerge from that training a man able to secure similar obedience from others, and to do so without bluster, or strain, or recourse to high-handed expedients. Men will instinctively recognise his right to exercise authority, and they will do so because he is himself under authority.

The principle holds good in every department of life. Personal power is always the outcome of personal submission. All experience justifies the inference that the right of leadership accorded to Christ was due to the instinctive recognition that He Himself was a man under authority: One who lived in the constant consciousness of the fact that He had been sent into the world to be the agent of the Eternal Will, and that the all-embracing function of His life was unquestioning obedience to that will.

But this conception carries us much further. It not merely furnishes us with a clue to the explanation of the Christ life, and of the relation in which He stood to His Father; it also throws a clear light on the relation in which He stood to His followers, and in which they stood to Him; on the claim which He made on them; on the motives which led them to

submit to that claim; and on the character of the life which sprang from that submission.

It was men's needs, as I have already said, which brought them to Christ, and needs of a definite and specific kind. Christ Himself constantly emphasised this fact. He again and again declared, in the most unequivocal terms, that only those who were conscious of these special needs were capable of responding to Him, and receiving the satisfaction which He came to bring them. If, then, our analysis of His character is true, if He was primarily and essentially "a man under authority," those who were attracted by Him, and capable of entering into personal union with Him, must have been men who were conscious of the need of authority, men who were conscious that they themselves were, or ought to be, subject to its control, that the ultimate principle of their nature was an authoritative principle which found its full expression in Him, and which could only achieve its rightful supremacy in the hierarchy of their endowments through the aid of the resources which He placed at their disposal.

Now only one kind of experience answers this description—the kind which we call moral. Among the many voices which claim man's attention and seek to direct his conduct, the

voice of conscience alone speaks with the accents of authority. It and it alone claims absolute supremacy. The desire for sensual gratification, for artistic satisfaction, for intellectual attainment, may compete with each other, but conscience refuses to enter into the competition. It and it alone declares "Thou shalt do this, thou shalt not do that," and refuses to condone any breach of its mandates, or any postponement of obedience to them.

Read in this context Christ's demand for the open ear and the open eye can only have one meaning. It can only mean that the necessary qualification which He required in His hearers was that their consciences should be alive and active, that they should recognise the absolute supremacy of the moral law, and should be trying to make that supremacy effective. On the foundation of this qualification He could build. With those who lacked it He could have no relation of a permanent and vital kind, however much they might be attracted and impressed by Him in other ways. The Sermon on the Mount concludes with these words—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and

the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes."

The meaning seems quite clear. His teaching was not addressed primarily to the intellect or the emotions. It could be appropriated and appreciated by these faculties, and still leave the nature in its essence untouched. It was addressed primarily to the faculties which have to do with conduct; to the conscience and the will. It was only when these responded to His message, and found in it the expression of their own highest law, that that vital development began whose consummation is eternal life.

This view is fully borne out by all that the Gospels tell us of Christ's characteristic social attitude and method of work. He is represented there as constantly emphasising the fact that there were large sections of people on

whom he could make no impression, that only those who possessed certain qualifications could appropriate His teaching, and that the majority of those with whom He had to do did not possess them.

This was the case with the crowd of mere loafers and sightseers who flocked round Him looking for a new excitement or a new sensation. It was the case also with those who came to Him from purely interested motives, who came merely to be fed or healed. He treated such people with every kindness and consideration. He let them interview Him and inconvenience Him, He gave them the food and healing which they asked for. But He made hardly any direct attempt to annex them to His discipleship. He seldom addressed His teaching to them, and when He did, He wrapped it in parables and hard sayings with the avowed design of making it difficult rather than easy for them to understand. To conceive of Christ as a kind of revivalist street preacher, ready to fling the treasures of His Gospel to every chance passer-by, and to supplicate him to accept them, is to travesty the whole Gospel presentation of His attitude. Gifts of mercy and of kindness and compassion He gave indeed with unstinted hands; but when He came to His

direct religious teaching, to the mysteries of the Kingdom which He had come to establish, we find Him extraordinarily reticent and reserved. These were by no means placed at the disposal of all who came. They were carefully guarded and protected, and only shown in their fulness and clearness to a select circle of His followers, and even to them only slowly and gradually. "Unto you," He said, "it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God; but unto them that are without, all these things are done in parables." "I have yet many things to say unto you, but ye cannot bear them now." "Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine." No one who reads the Gospels carefully can fail to see that this is our Lord's persistent attitude with regard to the great mass of men with whom He had to do. He was extraordinarily free in His intercourse with them in other respects; He was extraordinarily friendly and generous in His dealings with them. But when it came to the special religious truths which He had to reveal, to the special spiritual gifts which He had to bestow, His attitude of freedom was exchanged for one of great caution and reserve.

Towards one particular class He was not

even friendly disposed. He showed no leniency in His dealings with the Pharisees and Scribes, with the official religious class of His time. With some of its individual members He was on cordial terms; but the class as a whole, its characteristic mental and moral disposition, He evidently regarded with disfavour and distrust, amounting at times to unqualified repugnance. Not merely were they themselves incapable of responding to Him, but they prevented others from doing so; they were to Him blind leaders of the blind, men who had closed the gates of the Kingdom of Heaven, who would neither enter themselves nor allow others to do so. And, as we know, His antagonism was reciprocated: the Scribes and Pharisees gradually became more and more hostile to Him, and were at the end chiefly instrumental in securing His condemnation and death.

With whom, then, was our Lord able to deal? Where did He look for His followers, for those who possessed the kind of qualifications which He required? Well, so far as the inner band of His disciples were concerned, most of them seem to have come from the class to which He Himself belonged — the class of hardworking, regular-living peasants and artisans. But representatives of other classes were found among

them too. One was connected with the priestly aristocracy of the time, one had been a civil servant, while St Paul, the last to be included in the Apostolic College, was a man of good family and education. But they all had one attribute in common—they were all workers; all of them were men who had definite daily duties to perform, and who were sedulously engaged in their performance. And it was in the midst of these duties that the Lord's call came to them; to St Peter and St Andrew as they were fishing; to St James and St John as they were mending their nets; to St Matthew as he was receiving the taxes; to St Paul as he was hurrying on a service which he regarded as a mission from God.

But besides this inner circle of Apostles there was an outer band of disciples drawn from all sorts and conditions of men and women. And among these there were some, at any rate, who had lived as sinners, and even as open and notorious sinners. But this fact had apparently not disqualified them. Our Lord had not passed them by on this account. He had recognised them as possessing the qualification which He required. He had called them, and they had responded to His call.

What, then, was this qualification, found

chiefly and most conspicuously among the regular steady workers, whether with hand or head, found often among the reckless and sinful, found seldom among those who were dominated by the desire for excitement or gain, not merely not found, but replaced by a contradictory principle in the case of those who had identified themselves with the characteristic attitude of the religious classes of the time?

Look into the matter closely and I think we shall find that no answer is so complete and satisfactory as that which I have indicated. What our Lord demanded was the recognition of the supremacy of conscience, of the claim of duty to be the supreme controlling principle of the life. Such a recognition was easy in the case of those who were actually doing their duty from day to day, of those who had already acquired the duty habit, who looked out on life from that point of view, who instinctively interpreted its experiences and its claims in the light of conscience, and who were therefore prepared to receive a message which transformed their instinctive interpretation into a conscious one, and which told them that the path of duty consistently followed would lead them at length into the fulness of life. Nor did open sinfulness

and lawlessness of necessity prevent this recognition. Many a man then, many a man before and since then, has lived a bad life knowing that he ought not to be living it; has done the wrong thing knowing that he ought not to do it; the flesh has lusted against the spirit and has gained the victory, but the spirit has still remained alive and active, and even in its worse defeats has still asserted its claims. The evil that the man would not that he has done, but it has been the good that he would fain do if he could. The inner sanctuary of his soul is still untouched, at heart he is still loyal, though the forces of selfishness and sensuality may have captured the outworks of his nature. With such a man the case is by no means hopeless. Often the greater the tyranny of sin, the greater his desire to be free from it. Still the storm of passion and temptation for a time, and you will hear the cry, "Lord, be merciful to me, a sinner," coming from the very heart of his heart. Whenever he comes to himself, to his real self, his aspiration will be, "I will arise and go unto my Father and say unto Him, Father I have sinned." Let the Lord in His mercy approach such a man and offer him pardon and self-mastery and peace, let him get a glimpse of the Father's home and of the way

to return to it, and the loyal forces of his nature will rise up in glad response and join themselves to Him who offers them alliance and succour and final victory. No, the case of the sinner is not a hopeless one so long as the citadel of conscience remains intact, so long as the man, however disobedient, still recognises that he ought to obey. It would be bad for most of us were it otherwise. It only becomes hopeless when the citadel itself is captured, when the voice of conscience is silenced, when the man does that which is evil without compunction and without remorse. To such a man the claim of Christ is meaningless; he cannot respond to it, because his power of response is atrophied. With the sinner Christ can deal; the weakest cry for mercy will penetrate to His ear. But with the depraved He cannot deal, with those who have dethroned His vicegerent in their souls and no longer acknowledge His right to rule. God Himself cannot save a man against his will, and here the will has transferred its allegiance to His enemies.

But a very similar attitude may arise from mere carelessness and thoughtlessness; from the fact that the man has never stopped to reflect, has never tried to face reality, to be true to himself, but has allowed himself to be swayed by

passion or circumstance, to be controlled by his appetites and desires, without caring to test their right to control. This was the case with the great mass of men who flocked round Christ, as it is the case with the great mass of men still. Those who came to Him for mere information or excitement were conscious of no higher law than that of intellectual or emotional satisfaction; those who came to Him for food and healing had conceived of no higher good than physical ease and well-being. The consciences of these men were not depraved, but they were asleep, and so long as they remained asleep the Lord of conscience would appeal to them in vain. He knew this and did not appeal to them. "Ye seek Me," He said, "not because ye saw the miracles, but because ye did eat of the loaves, and were filled." He wrapped up His teaching in a form which they could not easily understand. He thus tried to awaken them, to make them reflect, to stimulate their thought, to test the earnestness of their thought. His aim was to convert them, to make them turn round, to arouse their consciousness of the real significance of life, and of the tremendous issues which it involves. Once this aim was accomplished response was possible; the ground was prepared on which the seed could be sown. Until it was

accomplished it was useless to sow it. Our Lord did not attempt to do so in dealing with such men. And as they represented the majority of men His religious method was, on the whole, as I have said, one of great caution and reticence and reserve.

The case of the Scribes and Pharisees was different, and, in our Lord's view, evidently the least hopeful of all—less hopeful even than that of the morally depraved. Why was this? They were religious people, they were respectable people, they were moral people, they were up to a certain point humane and philanthropic people. Why did our Lord condemn them in such sweeping terms: why did He tell them that the very publicans and harlots would enter the Kingdom before them?

I don't think that the answer is difficult. In the first place, the Pharisees in practice denied the supremacy of conscience. That they did so is shown by the fact of their self-satisfaction. Self-satisfaction is impossible to a really conscientious man; for the claim of conscience is an advancing claim. The more we obey it, the greater its demands become; the ideal to which it points is one of infinite perfection, and the more the man advances towards it the more he recognises this, the more he becomes conscious

of the gap between him and it, between what he is and what he ought to be. Self-satisfaction for such a man is impossible; his growing tendency is towards deeper and deeper self-abasement. St Paul was not using hyperbolic words when he declared himself to be the chief of sinners. He was merely expressing the experience which must grow in intensity at each successive stage along the path of holiness. The greater the man's attainment of good, the greater his consciousness of evil: the greater the obedience the greater the demand, and the greater the recognition of failure to satisfy the demand. But, in the second place, the Pharisees had not, like the morally depraved, merely dethroned conscience and substituted self in its stead. They had perverted conscience, and made it issue the commands of self in its own name and under its own authority. Conscience was still the nominal ruler, but the laws which it administered were not God's laws but man's laws. "Ye have made the commandment of God of none effect by your tradition . . . teaching for doctrines the commandments of men."

This was the worst and most hopeless case of all. Self-righteousness is worse even than depravity. Depravity is the open rebellion of the forces of self-will against God; the forcible

dethronement of conscience from the supremacy of the soul. But self-righteousness is the attempt to place self on the throne which God alone should occupy; to worship it instead of God, to allow it to speak with His authority, and to issue its edicts in His name. This, indeed, is the lie of the soul, the principle of evil there posing as the principle of good. It is the sin against the Holy Ghost, the only sin which the mercy of God cannot reach.

We have been seeking for the ultimate principle of the Christ life, and therefore of the Christian life; the principle to which all its activities can be traced, and which binds them together as one connected and consistent whole. I have tried to indicate some of the reasons which point to the conclusion that this principle is that of authority; that Christ's consciousness was dominated by the sense of responsibility to a Higher Power; that its master-note was that of unquestioning submission to His Father's will. I have tried also to show that it was only from men in whom a similar consciousness was alive and active that He looked for a response; men who recognised that neither the desire for happiness nor enlightenment could be accepted as the ultimate motive of conduct, but that its true ends could only be achieved through active submission to an

authoritative law, to whose rightful supremacy their own consciences bore witness. Men, in other words, who were true to the facts of their own nature, since in the hierarchy of that nature, when unsophisticated and undepraved, conscience occupies the throne of absolute and unquestioned sovereignty. Such men turned to Him, and found in Him the satisfaction of their ultimate needs. He was to them the great interpreter of conscience; the life to which He introduced them was the life of duty expressed in its highest terms, the life of duty made intelligible by His teaching, and made possible through the aid of the resources which He placed at their disposal. It was the life of salvation, the true, normal, healthy human life, the life in accordance with the essential constitution of human nature; the happy life, therefore, for happiness is but the consciousness of such accordance, and the eternal life, for death, which is the outcome of unhealth, is deprived of its antecedent conditions in a life whose essential principle is that of health.

The life of duty expressed in its highest terms. That seems to me the most complete and illuminative description of the Christian life; of the life which Christ Himself lived, and which He came to place within the reach of men. The master-note of that life is the note

of authority; its prevailing attitude is that of active obedience; its dominating consciousness is that of mission, of vocation, of consecration. The Christian is primarily and essentially a soldier and servant of Christ; one commissioned and empowered by Him for the performance of a certain allotted work, and whose whole life function is to be found in the due performance of that work. What, then, is the general scope and character of that work, and how far can it justify its claim to be congruous with the requirements of progressive manhood?

VI

THE KINGSHIP OF CHRIST

CHRIST'S appeal was made to men who were trying to do their duty; men who recognised the supremacy of conscience, and were trying to make that supremacy effective. They came to Him with their needs, and it was because He fully satisfied them that they accepted Him not merely as their Master, but as God Himself, with a surety of conviction which required no external argument for its support, and which, once attained, no external argument could shake.

These needs must have been very deep-rooted, they must have been relative to the very foundations of their lives, if their satisfaction could produce such a result. Can we analyse them and the character of the response which Christ accorded to them? So far as we can do so we shall gain a clear view of the essential constitution of the Christian life, of its ultimate motives, and aims, and methods.

It will help us in this endeavour if we place ourselves in the position of a man who is trying earnestly to do his duty; who is trying to be true to the facts of his own nature and to the ultimate fact of all—the fact of the absolute supremacy of the moral law, and of the absolute obligation which lies upon him to obey that law, and to ignore all objects of pursuit which interfere with such obedience.

He recognises all this with greater or less clearness. What are the chief obstacles which prevent him from translating that recognition into practice? Why is it that this supreme law of his being is unable to assert its supremacy over the details of his conduct? Why is it that the obedience he renders is at best very imperfect; is often replaced by open and flagrant disobedience?

I think that if we analyse the matter we shall find that these obstacles are relative to the answers to four questions beginning with the words — Why? Whither? What? How? Why should I obey conscience? Whither does obedience to conscience lead? What in this or that particular instance is the true line of obedience? and How am I to obey? How am I to overcome the stubborn resistance to obedience offered by other claims of my nature?

Let us consider these questions one by one, and the character of the answers to them implied in Christ's life and teaching.

First, then, why should I obey conscience? This is a question which is bound to arise once a man begins to reflect. The child does not ask it. For him it is sufficient that conscience demands obedience, he does not ask it for its credentials. And this child attitude maintains itself in the case of many grown-up men, perhaps the majority of healthy-minded men. They feel quite sure that conscience is the rightful ruler of their nature, but they have never examined, perhaps it has never occurred to them to examine, the reasons for their confidence. Their difficulties are practical rather than intellectual. They have no doubt that they ought to obey: the trouble is that they do not and cannot obey as they ought. But with men of more active minds the case is different. The more their intelligence develops the more importunate its demands become. They cannot deny the obligation to obedience: it is an ultimate fact of their experience, and to deny it would be to deny the validity of all experience and the possibility, therefore, of any real knowledge. No healthy-minded men will acquiesce in such a denial; scepticism and agnosticism belong to the

pathology of human nature, not to its normal development. But all the same, no intelligent man can be satisfied with blind obedience. The demand to know the reasons of things is also an ultimate demand of his nature, the claim of which he cannot ignore. I feel that I ought to obey, but before I can render whole-hearted obedience I must know the "why" and "wherefore" of this feeling. Why, then, should I do my duty? Why should I at all costs obey conscience? Conscience itself does not tell me why. It offers no explanation of itself. It issues its commands: it tells me "You must do this, you must not do that," but it speaks with the voice of authority, not with that of reasonable argument. What is the basis of this authority? On what grounds does one faculty of my nature assume this relation of supremacy to all my other faculties? By what right does it demand that their activities should in every case be made subordinate to its claims? That is the first question which faces any man who tries to live the life of duty, and to live it consciously and intelligently.

Apart from religion several answers have been given to this question. That offered by the different systems of Hedonism need not detain us long. The attempt to identify the moral

motive with that of enlightened self-interest has completely failed, and its failure is now generally recognised by serious thinkers. The Hedonist theory is open to two fatal objections. In the first place, it is out of accordance with the facts of experience. As a matter of fact moral action, so far as the individual is concerned, is often found to be contrary to his self-interest, if we mean by his self-interest his pleasure or his worldly success; while if we extend its meaning to include the satisfaction which comes from the mere fact of well-doing, this implies that moral action is an end in itself, and cannot be regarded as a means to any other end. And then, in the second place, it does not explain the fact of duty at all, but only tries to do so by explaining it away. To the ordinary healthy-minded man the idea of self-interest and the idea of duty are quite different and distinct from each other—as different and distinct as the idea of a sound is from that of a sight. When you say to such a man, "You ought to do so and so," he understands you to mean something absolutely and totally different from what you mean when you say, "It will pay you to do so and so." You may prove to him, or may not prove to him, that it will pay him to do his duty, but this will not affect his inner conviction that he ought to do it

whether it pays him or not; that the claim of duty is quite independent of the results of duty-doing. It is this claim which he wants explained. Hedonism does not explain it; it only attempts to explain it away—that is, to prove that it does not really exist.

The old Greeks answered the question "Why should I do my duty?" in somewhat different terms. Speaking generally, their best philosophers tended to identify the idea of the good with the idea of the beautiful, and the desire for the good with the desire for the beautiful. So their main answer was, "You should do right because good action is the most beautiful kind of action, and a good character is the most beautiful kind of character." The answer was on a much higher level than that of Hedonism. It justified noble deeds of heroism and self-sacrifice, and placed them before men as ends in themselves apart from any results which might come from them. It does not pay one to die for one's country, or to suffer persecution and privation in a great cause; but such deeds are beautiful and noble and inspiring, and the character of the man who performs them naturally and spontaneously, calls forth our instinctive admiration. That was the predominant Greek ideal of life and character;

the ideal of nobility and symmetry and grace, the artistic ideal, the ideal which identifies goodness with beauty, evil with ugliness. It is in some respects a very high ideal; it is at the present time the characteristic ideal of what we call an English gentleman. The word gentleman, in the popular phraseology of the day, stands for a man whose dominant motive is that of honour, of *noblesse oblige*; a man who won't do a mean thing, or a dishonest thing, or a vindictive thing, not so much because these are wrong, as because it is beneath him to act in such a manner. He will readily sacrifice money or health or life itself in a noble cause, not so much because it is right to do so, as because the cause is a noble one, which attracts his best instincts, and fits in with his best traditions.

The ideal is a high one, but it is not the moral ideal: honour is one thing, duty is another; the desire for the beautiful is one thing, the desire for the good, and the obligation to seek it, is something quite different. We cannot answer the question "Why should I do my duty?" in these terms.

For in the first place the immediate results of duty-doing are by no means always beautiful; they are often very ugly and very distasteful.

The path of duty is strewn not merely with hardships and sufferings; it also sometimes leads us through regions of humiliation and misunderstanding and contemptuous scorn, very distasteful indeed to a high-spirited gentleman. If his highest motive is the desire for the beautiful, or the sense of honour, such regions are impenetrable by him. And in the second place the claim of duty is quite different from that of beauty or of honour. When I say, "This is a right thing to do," I mean something totally and absolutely different from what I mean when I say, "This is a beautiful thing or an honourable thing." The former statement penetrates into a far deeper region of my nature than the latter; it carries with it a sense of compulsion and obligation peculiar to itself. It places me, moreover, in an attitude of reverence quite different from that which I adopt towards the beautiful or the honourable. I cannot reverence a beautiful action or an honourable action. I may admire it and respond to it, but I do not reverence it. But I do reverence a right action. I recognise it as something which claims something more than admiration, which claims, and rightly claims, respect, nay, almost worship. This answer, like that of Hedonism, attempts to explain the idea of duty by explaining it

away, albeit that the level at which it makes the attempt is a much higher and more congenial one.

The line of explanation inaugurated by the great German philosopher Kant takes us much deeper down, and much nearer the real truth. He tells us that this law of duty, this Categorical Imperative as he calls it, belongs to the essential constitution of our nature. That as the human intellect in dealing with phenomena must relate them to each other and to itself under the forms of space and time, so in dealing with persons it must so relate them under the forms of duty and goodness. That the statement "You must do your duty" has the same ultimate and essential character as the statement "Two and two make four." You cannot prove one any more than you can prove the other; you cannot give a reason for one any more than for the other. But a healthy mind does not ask for a proof or a reason. The question "Why?" is here unanswerable, but it is irrelevant. Both statements are self-evident, they carry their own proof with them; once we understand them we are bound to recognise their truth.

This answer, as I have said, brings us much deeper down. It connects the law of duty with the ultimate constitution of our nature. But it

is not completely satisfactory. And it is not satisfactory for this reason among others. It takes no account of the feeling of reverence to which I have already referred, and which always accompanies the thought of duty, and gives that thought its compelling force. We cannot reverence the ultimate constitution of our own nature; our nature cannot reverence itself. The attitude of reverence is only possible in the presence of something outside ourselves and above ourselves; it must belong not merely to the ultimate constitution of our natures, but to the ultimate constitution of the universe to which our natures belong. But even still this feeling of reverence is not explained. You cannot reverence any law, however universal and necessary; you cannot reverence the law of gravity, for instance, though, so far as we know, it holds good through the whole material creation. You can only reverence a person, an intelligent, self-conscious being. This law of duty, then, must emanate from such a person, and must belong to the essential constitution of His Being. In other words, the law of duty presupposes and implies the existence of a Personal God; it must emanate from His omnipotent and eternal will.

Thus human speculation, extended far enough, brings us to the steps of the throne of God.

Morality, if it is to justify itself, must pass into religion; right relations with our fellow-men imply and lead up to right relations with God.

This was the truth which men had been groping towards in the ages preceding Christ. It had reached its highest expression in the Jewish religion, and more especially in the utterances of the Jewish prophets. By them God was presented as essentially a God of righteousness; One whose primary claim on man was for right conduct; One whose requirements could not be satisfied, One whose just judgment could not be averted, by anything less than this.

It was to men brought up under the influence of this teaching that Christ, in the first place, addressed His message. The fulness of the time had come in which that message could be delivered. In their minds the idea of obedience to conscience and the idea of obedience to God had come very close to one another. But they had not as yet been fully identified with each other. For the God whom they worshipped and obeyed was still a far-off God; One whose essential life lay outside the province of man's life here on earth; One, therefore, to whom full obedience could only be rendered by rising above the duties and obligations of that life. But conscience was concerned with these very

duties and obligations; obedience to it was not indeed inconsistent with obedience to God; it foreshadowed it and prepared for it, but it was not identical with it. God and man, religion and morality, still stood apart from each other; they had close affinities, but they still were regarded as belonging to distinct and separate orders. So long as this distinction was maintained, the answer to the question "Why should I do my duty?" could not be given in terms which completely satisfied man's needs by merging his moral life and his religious life into one; by showing him that obedience to conscience was not merely preparatory to obedience to God, but was identical with it; that no other road can lead us to God but the road of consistent duty-doing.

Now it was just this final answer which Christ came to give; it was just this distinction between religion and morality He came to annul. By taking on Him man's nature He bridged over the gulf which separated God and man. God and man, religion and morality, meet in His Person.

See what men who came to Him found. They found one who was living a life of absolute duty, obeying the commands of conscience perfectly and unfalteringly, as no one has ever

obeyed them before or since. And then when they asked Him to explain Himself, to tell them what was the ultimate motive of His action, His reply was unfaltering and unhesitating. "I came," He said, "not to do My own will but the will of Him who sent Me." In other words, He identifies the law of duty and the law of God's life absolutely and unequivocally. They are to Him two words for one idea. Nothing lies outside the law of duty, not even the life of God Himself: nothing lies outside the claim of God, not even the smallest and most commonplace responsibility which we owe to our fellow-men.

That was Christ's answer to the question "Why should I do my duty?" It is the final answer, the only completely satisfying answer, for it merges morality into religion; it joins God to man; duty becomes the ladder by which man can, without break or interruption, gain the completion of his being by personal union with God.

The men to whom Christ appealed, the men who were trying, however feebly, to do their duty, gradually recognised its completeness and its finality. They found in Christ One whose life was lived in complete accordance with the law of duty, and who could, therefore, speak

with irresistible authority as to its sanction and its source. Its source, He told them, was the Personal God, who was His Father and theirs; its sanction lay in the fact that it was the human expression of the ultimate law of that Father's will. Obedience to that law meant, therefore, the union of their wills with His, which was all one with the union of their persons with His. And Christ Himself, through the completeness of His obedience, showed that this union was in His case perfect and complete. When He declared to them later on, "I and My Father are one," He used words which at first they would have shrunk from, but which they now recognised as the expression of a truth proved by unanswerable evidence—by the only kind of evidence available for such a proof. Personal union is identical with union of wills, and the complete union of Christ with His Father could only be proved by the complete union of His will with His Father's. This proof Christ gave in the perfection of His life, and it was to this proof that He pointed as the ultimate basis of His claim for acceptance. "Which of you," He said, "convinceth Me of sin; and if I say the truth, why do ye not believe Me?" His words fell for the most part on deaf ears. The mass of men who heard them lacked the qualifica-

tions necessary for their appreciation. But those whose eyes were open, the true men, the men who were trying to be true to the facts of their own nature, the men who acknowledged that conscience is the rightful sovereign of that nature, and that its salvation, its normal and healthy life, could only be achieved through the effective establishment of this sovereignty, these men heard and understood and were convinced. They saw in Christ perfect man, and they gradually came to see that He could not be perfect man unless He was perfect God as well; that human nature, which comes from God, and belongs to God, can only achieve its perfection through complete union with God. Thus the ultimate aspirations of their souls were satisfied in Christ. They were seeking for God, and they found God in Christ and Christ in God. Their conscience bore witness that He spoke truth when He declared that the way through Him was the only way; that no man could come to the Father but through Him. They bore similar witness when He told them that those who had seen Him had seen the Father, so far as this vision is possible under the conditions of human life, for that He Himself was God Incarnate in the flesh. Conscience bowed to Him as its rightful Lord, and paid

Him the homage which it could only pay to One who was very God.

In Christ, God and man meet; morality and religion are merged into one. In the light of His revelation men found that their true relations with their fellow-men are an integral and essential part of their true relations with God; that the law of duty not merely comes from God and leads up to Him, but that it is the essential law of His own life expressing itself in the terms of time. Submission to that law thus meant much more than conformity to an external standard of rectitude. It meant identifying themselves with the ultimate law of the universe; it meant joining the slender current of their lives' efforts to that great stream of purpose which keeps the stars in their courses, which guides the destiny of the ages, which one day is to consummate itself in a new heaven and a new earth. It not merely prepared them for participation in eternal life; it was itself the initial stage of this participation. For eternal life is God's life, and the essential principle of God's life is the principle which conscience reveals and the dictates of duty apply.

VII

THE KINGDOM OF CHRIST

THE second great obstacle which stands in the way of duty-doing is concerned with its results. What is the final goal to which obedience to conscience leads? To what final issue is it relative? What will be its final outcome in the life of the man himself and of his fellow-men?

Let us try to appreciate the significance of these questions. They go very deep. They bring us face to face with one of the ultimate problems of human life. For the desire for happiness is an ultimate desire of our nature. Given complete happiness we can desire nothing more; happiness is but another name for the satisfaction of all desire.

How, then, is this ultimate fact related to the recognition, irresistible to every healthy mind, that the commands of conscience must at all costs and all hazards be obeyed? At first sight the two claims seem to be contrary, if not irreconcilable, to each other. In actual life duty

and happiness by no means always harmonise, they sometimes seem to stand in open antagonism. Indeed it may be argued that duty-doing always involves some degree of unhappiness, some amount of strain and suffering; while at the great crisis of life this discordance often becomes acute, and the path of duty often leads to the surrender of nearly everything that goes to make up happiness, as we ordinarily understand the term.

The antagonism plainly cannot be absolute and final. These two ultimate desires — the desire for happiness and the desire for good— must in the long run harmonise with each other, and find their centre of unity in that God who has implanted both in our souls. The fact that they both are derived from Him assures us that both must find their satisfaction in Him. The unity of our own nature and of God's nature would be unthinkable if this were not so, and these unities are the primary postulates and conditions of all our thought.

But how, and when, and where, is this antagonism to be resolved? So far as human life, as we know it here on earth, is concerned, the paths of duty and happiness are distinct and often widely divergent. Doubtless duty-doing brings happiness of its own, but even under

the most favourable conditions this happiness is very incomplete. It is only when using the language of poetry that we say that a man who in the course of duty has to surrender health, or home, or life, is perfectly happy. He may feel that the surrender is worth while; that he could not as a true man act otherwise. But there is no ignoring the fact that in acting thus large claims of his nature have been ruthlessly disregarded. He may have rejected them in favour of a higher claim, but they are there all the same, and so long as they are there, and are unsatisfied, his happiness has not been achieved.

It is a world-old question. Ever since man began to reflect he has demanded an answer to it. Until it is answered his nature is like a house divided against itself, the desire for happiness drawing him one way, the desire for goodness another. There can be no unity or consistency or persistent progress in a life subject to such divided allegiance. That constitutes the second great difficulty with which the path of duty-doing is embarrassed. Before men can enter on that path with intelligent wholeheartedness they must know, not merely why they should do so, but also whither it is to lead them.

The significance of the answer to this question given by Christ will best be understood if studied

in the context of the traditional religious conceptions of those who first heard it.

The Jewish religion in its earlier stages had no doctrine of a future life. It did not deny the existence of such a life, but it ignored it. Its account of God's dealings with man was limited to the years of his earthly sojourn, and its teaching with regard to the relation between duty and happiness was quite simple and direct. Goodness, it taught, brought its reward in temporal happiness and prosperity. The man who obeyed God's laws was rewarded with fortune, and comfort, and health, and friends. The man who disobeyed was deprived by God of such benefits, and finally of life itself. Such teaching, however, could not for long stand the test of experience. Even under the simple conditions of a primitive social state temporal prosperity was not always the sequel of right action, temporal misfortune of wrong. And as these conditions became more complicated, the discrepancy became more marked and could not fail to arrest attention. So the teaching gradually came to be interpreted in a different sense. First its application was transferred from the individual to the nation. It was the righteous nation which would flourish, the unrighteous which would be destroyed. This was the burden of the message of the earlier

prophets. With winged words of fire they denounced the social and political evils of their times: the oppression of the poor by the rich, the destruction of the old peasant proprietory, the corruption of the law courts. A nation in which such injustices were prevalent would certainly incur the divine judgment. The nation itself must repent and reform its ways if it was to escape destruction. But their warnings were unheeded, and at last the judgment fell. The Israelitish nation became a thing of the past; it could no longer be exhorted and warned, for it no longer existed. So the teaching of the later prophets was forced to a further stage of development. They still denounce wrong; they still preach repentance; they still assert the principle that the sequel of righteousness is happiness, and that the sequel of unrighteousness is unhappiness. But their message is addressed to individuals rather than to the race as a whole. Each individual Israelite must purge himself of evil if he is to escape God's righteous judgment.

But the ideal to which they pointed was still a social ideal. It was the ideal of the restoration of the Kingdom to Israel. This restoration, they taught, would take place when the work of individual repentance was complete. God

would then gather together once more His elect people, purified by suffering, and would constitute them into a righteous nation, over which He would reign in undisputed supremacy. It was in the life of this nation that the discrepancy between right-doing and happiness would be resolved. The nation would enjoy peace, and power, and prosperity, and its individual members would share to the full in these blessings.

This hope of the restoration of the Kingdom became the inspiring hope of the Jewish race. It dominated their race consciousness; it enabled them to maintain their race identity in their dispersion; it supported them through centuries of oppression and tribulation. It is true that in the popular consciousness it became to a large extent detached from the claim for repentance, as the necessary condition of its realisation. It is true that the majority of Jews at the time of Christ seem to have looked for the restoration of the Kingdom through political readjustment rather than as the outcome of a gradual process of moral regeneration, and were, as a result, ready to identify themselves easily with projects of a revolutionary character. But the doctrine of the Kingdom never wholly lost its moral significance, and when St John the Baptist arose

and declared once more the paramount need for repentance, the popular conscience responded to his teaching, and the people came out in crowds to listen to him.

But the doctrine, as thus stated, only covered half the ground. It held out a hope for the future, but it did not meet the claims of the present, or explain the experiences of the past. The establishment of the Kingdom at some future time left the problem of the discrepancy between the ways of well-being and well-doing unsolved, unless the righteous of the generations prior to its establishment had a share in its blessedness. This they could not have if their experience of life was limited to the time they spent on this earth. So the doctrine of a future life, in which the injustices of the present life would be redressed, became a necessity of religious thought.

The later prophets recognised this necessity, and extended the range of the Kingdom from this world to another world beyond the grave, and by the time of Christ their teaching in this respect had been thought out, and formulated, and accepted as one of the chief tenets of orthodox theological truth.

Thus for those whom Christ addressed, the doctrine of the Kingdom included two comple-

mentary conceptions: the conception, on the one hand, of a perfect society to which the souls of the righteous would be introduced in the world beyond the grave; the conception, on the other hand, of the righteous remnant of God's elect people organised in a similar society here on earth. It is in the context of this twofold conception that His teaching must be studied if we are to understand its full significance.

The real question which religious-minded men wanted an answer to was—"What is the relation of the body to the religious life?" It was not in this form that they asked the question, but this is its ultimate form. For all religion springs from the instinctive desire of man's soul for union with God; it is this desire which seeks to find expression in every religious creed and cult, from the lowest form of fetichism to the most developed form of Christianity. But when the man tries to satisfy this desire, he finds at once that it is the body, the sensitive organism, and the whole external world of nature and man with which it connects him, which stand in the way. It is the flesh which strives against the spirit and prevents it from achieving its true destiny. How is he to regard this organically connected system of emotions and passions and desires which contend with conscience for mastery?

In the last resort only two answers can be given to this question: the answer given by the two great world religions—Buddhism and Christianity. The body, Buddhism teaches, is merely a temporary clothing of the soul, at best its training-ground, at worst its prison house. The emotions and passions and desires are, therefore, merely ephemeral enemies, external embarrassments to the true soul life. The final issue of the conflict is the disentanglement of that life from their influence. The final destiny of the soul, of the eternal element in man's nature, is Nirvana, an existence in which desire and passion and emotion shall have no place, in which self-conscious thought itself shall for ever cease.

This answer has been nominally accepted by hundreds of millions of men. But their acceptance has for the most part only been nominal. True Buddhism is, and always must be, a religion for monks, for a comparatively small body of ascetics and recluses. If its tenets are true, men can only attain their true destiny by cutting themselves off from all social relationships and claims, by severing all the ties which bind them to their fellow-men. If all professing Buddhists did this, Buddhism could not last for more than one short generation.

But the facts of human nature are too strong for any religious teaching which seeks to place the passions, and emotions, and intellect, and desires outside the religious life. No argument will prove to the mass of men that child love and wife love, that social amenities and friendships, that the beauties of nature and the triumphs of art and science, are bad things in themselves, or that they are even ephemeral and unstable things, with no significance and no outcome in the eternal order. The desire for happiness can never be satisfied by the dream of a Nirvana, of an impersonal absorption into an impersonal unknown. What we want is happiness of the kind which we get many foretastes of here: happiness in which our whole manhood will share; happiness in which the claims of body and soul and intellect and spirit will be fully satisfied. The life of salvation, the eternal life, for which we crave, is one which is in essential continuity with our present life. It is "I" in the full plenitude of my powers who wish to be saved; not some spiritual essence of myself, not some abstract principle of my being bereft of all those attributes by which I recognise my own personal identity.

The Buddhist answer is the answer of pessimism

and despair. It meets the desire for eternal happiness with the vision of a future life depleted of all that makes it desirable. It never has satisfied and never will satisfy normal men. It does not satisfy the mass of nominal Buddhists. They find their religious resources, not in its attenuated creed, but in a number of superstitious practices and beliefs which have grown up round it, and which, with all their grossness, have the merit of taking into account those primal and ineradicable instincts of human nature which it vainly endeavours to destroy.

The answer of Christianity is implied in the fact of the Incarnation. If a human body was used by God to manifest His life to men, then man's body and the relationships in which it involves him cannot lie outside the region of the religious life. They must be vitally and integrally connected with it. The body according to this teaching is not the prison house of the soul, but its necessary instrument and medium of expression, and capable of becoming its perfect instrument. In other words, the life of salvation which Christ came to place within man's reach is a life in which his whole manhood will find its full satisfaction. He came to save not merely men's souls, regarded as detachable entities, but men as they actually

exist here on earth—beings in whose nature physical and intellectual and spiritual powers are inextricably intertwined. But men thus described are essentially social beings; they are so closely connected with, so intimately dependent upon each other, that the full salvation of an individual man is unthinkable apart from that of his fellow-men; as unthinkable as the healthy activity of a single member of a human body would be if the other members were diseased or paralysed. Hence the salvation which Christianity offers to men must mean the salvation of human society. The message of Christ must primarily be a social message. No other interpretation is consistent with His claim to be the Incarnate Son of God.

And Christ Himself placed this interpretation beyond doubt by the initial proclamation of His Gospel. When He declared, "The Kingdom of God is at hand," He used words which, as we have seen, were quite familiar to His hearers, and conveyed to them a definite, concrete meaning. With what was essential in this meaning Christ fully identified Himself. He had to tell them later on that the Kingdom would not be limited to the Jews, but would finally include the whole human race. But it is impossible to conceive that they did not

understand Him to mean, and it is difficult to believe that He did not intend them to understand Him to mean, a visible Kingdom established here on earth. This interpretation of His words has, as we know, been questioned in later times, chiefly in the interests, or under the influence, of certain subjective and individualistic modes of religious thought. But if we compare the different references to the Kingdom contained in the Gospel records, it is, I think, impossible to say that, taken together, they are capable of any other interpretation. Some of them in isolation may be, but others could not have failed to convey the impression to Christ's followers that He intended them to understand His words in the accepted sense. Moreover—and this seems to me to place the matter beyond controversy—there is no doubt that His first disciples understood them in this sense. There is no doubt whatever that the first generation of Christians believed that the second Advent would take place almost immediately; that possibly during their own lifetimes, certainly at some time in the near future, Christ would come again in His glory, and would establish His Kingdom here on earth. It is certain that even writers like St Paul shared in this belief. It became mitigated as the first generation gradually passed

away, and the coming was still delayed. A more remote future was substituted for a near future; the conception of a sudden supernatural event gradually became exchanged for that of a gradual process working through the ages towards an appointed end. But from the belief that Christ's Kingdom would one day be established here on earth, the Christians of the early centuries never swerved. The testimony of the Apocalypse alone is conclusive on this point. Whatever view may be held as to its date and authorship, the fact that it was gradually accepted by the Christian community as an inspired book, and included in their authorised canon, shows that the community recognised in it an expression of their own prevalent beliefs and hopes. Its evidential value with regard to these beliefs and hopes would be stronger rather than weaker if it were proved that St John could not have been its author. When, therefore, we find that the vision of the final consummation of Christ's purpose described in the 21st chapter includes earth as well as heaven in its view, when we find it stated there in the most explicit terms that this purpose would not be achieved till God's will was supreme in both alike, and the results of disobedience to that will, sorrow and pain and death had for ever passed away,

we may conclude with practical certainty that this view was shared by the great body of Christians of the time, and that it owed its prevalence to the fact that Christ's declarations as to the coming of His Kingdom were generally interpreted in their accustomed sense.

This, then, was part of Christ's answer to the question as to the relation between well-doing and well-being. He started from the answer given by the Jewish religion of the time. He identified Himself with its declaration that the paths of goodness and happiness, though now often distinct, were convergent and would sooner or later coincide. He declared in explicit terms that one day the Kingdom of God would be established here on earth. He resolutely refused to place this world outside the scope of the Divine purpose. That purpose would not be achieved till God's will was done on earth as it is in heaven. But while accepting the Jewish conception He widened and purified it. The Kingdom which he spoke of was freed from all national limitations. It would include not merely the Jewish race, but the whole race of men. The life of salvation would be available for all alike; all alike would one day share in its blessedness. And He freed the conception from the political associations with which it had

become connected in the popular mind. The establishment of the Kingdom was to be the result, not of institutional revolution, but of a gradual process of moral regeneration.

But this was only one half of Christ's answer. To tell men that the trend of moral progress was in the direction of a well-being which in the end would be complete, did not meet the needs of those who found that the part which they were called to play in forwarding this progress involved much ill - being for them. What they wanted to be assured of was that in their individual cases obedience to conscience would lead them to happiness. This assurance Christ gave them in the most explicit terms. He again started from the basis of the current Jewish belief. He accepted fully its doctrine of a future life. He did not argue about this doctrine; He seemed to assume its truth as something which was self-evident, which could not be denied without impugning the justice and goodness of God. He brushed aside almost with contempt the quibbling objections of its Sadducean opponents. But He carried its evidence to a further and conclusive point. By His own resurrection He added the witness of definite historical fact to the moral and theological considerations which had hitherto

formed the chief grounds of its acceptance. And by the character of that resurrection He established once for all the complete continuity of personal identity in this world and that beyond the grave. It was no mere abstract spiritual essence which survived the ordeal of physical death. The Christ who burst the bonds of the grave, and who, during forty days, appeared to and communed with His disciples, was the same Christ whom they had known and loved and followed to the Cross. It was not merely His soul which continued to exist: the physical organism through which that soul had expressed itself in the activities of self-conscious and social life during His earthly sojourn shared in this continuity: the grave was found empty when the disciples came to it: the body as well as the soul had departed thence.

This conception of the bodily resurrection has in modern times proved a stumbling-block to many who are fully prepared to accept the doctrine of a future life, and who are also willing to admit that the continuity of personal identity in that life implies embodied existence of some kind. And there is no doubt that the conception may be presented in terms which make it quite unthinkable. There is no doubt, for instance, that the prevalent belief among the

early Christians was that the material particles of which the bodies of the faithful consisted at the time of their death would be gathered together once more on the Resurrection Day and form the corporal clothing of their immortal souls. There is no doubt, either, that this belief remained prevalent till recent times, and that it is still held by many devout Christians at the present day. It is, of course, quite unthinkable by any one who has even an elementary knowledge of the physical processes to which a human body is subject both during life and after death. But the Christian who declares his acceptance of the doctrine of the resurrection of the body, does not commit himself to any such extravagance of belief. What, however, he does commit himself to is, not merely the eternal continuity of personal existence, but some sort of continuity between the material and the spiritual. When St Paul speaks of the material bodies of our temporal life being organically connected with the spiritual bodies of our eternal life, as the seed is organically connected with the plant which springs from it, his teaching finds its warrant in that of the empty grave. The risen Christ revealed Himself to His disciples not merely as an embodied spirit, but as a spirit whose bodily organism had maintained

its continuity through the episode of physical death. The full significance of this revelation we cannot yet define. We cannot define in any satisfactory terms what we mean by the continuity of bodily existence here on earth; we assume it as a matter of course; we have no manner of doubt that each of us passes through life with the same body with which he was born, though we know that the material particles of which that body is composed are constantly passing away and constantly being renewed. Nor are scientists yet fully agreed as to the nature of these material particles themselves. The most modern theory, I believe, is that they are nucleus centres of an elusive substance which pervades the whole material universe, and which forms the sole ultimate constituent of every element in that universe. If this theory is true, and it is supported by very high authority, the claim involved in Christ's bodily resurrection seems to become much more readily acceptable from the scientific side. If the material universe is itself continuous, if its different phenomena can be conceived as modes or manifestations of one and the same substance, then the claim for the continuity of God's Kingdom on the physical as well as on the spiritual side becomes much more easily

thinkable. And that certainly seems to be the claim involved in Christ's bodily resurrection: it is the claim of God to be all in all, to leave nothing outside the process of regeneration inaugurated by the Incarnation, to include the physical as well as the spiritual universe in the organised unity of His Kingdom.

To sum up. Men came to Christ with the world-old question of the relation between goodness and happiness. They asked Him to justify God's ways to them; to tell them how it was that He should have implanted these two ultimate desires in their nature, and then placed them in a world where the satisfaction of the one meant so often the denial of the other. Christ answered them by deed rather than by word. He lived a perfectly good life, with the full knowledge of the penalties which such a life involves. He suffered these penalties in their extremest form; He drained the cup of sorrow and suffering to the dregs. But still He never swerved from the declaration that love is the controlling principle of all things; that it must in the long run triumph, and bring universal happiness in its train. This kingdom of love, He told them, was already established in the world beyond the grave, and mansions were prepared there for those who would follow

the way He trod. And it would one day be extended to this earth as well. The process of its extension would be gradual and slow, but its outcome was assured. Sooner or later His purpose would be achieved and His Father's will prevail in Heaven and earth alike. It was in the light of this purpose that they were to interpret the responsibilities of life and to meet its claims. They were workers together with Him for its achievement. Through the consciousness of this co-operation they would rise to the level at which Christ Himself lived; a level at which sorrows and suffering, hardships and privations, would sink into insignificance beside the exceeding weight of glory which would one day be revealed. Why they should occur, why the path of duty-doing should lead through so many dark valleys of struggle and affliction, was still an unanswered question. It must remain so, till from the vantage-point of eternity the harmony can be heard in its completeness, and the discords which distress us here can be discerned as necessary notes in the strain of all-embracing love.

VIII

THE CHURCH OF CHRIST

The third question with which the man who is trying to do his duty is embarrassed is concerned with the content of the moral law. What is my duty? How am I to interpret and apply its absolute and obligatory demands? Conscience gives no information on this point: it does not explain or apply itself. It merely says, "When you know what your duty is, you must do it," but it does not tell us how we are to attain that knowledge, and its attainment plainly is not a simple matter. This is shown by the egregious mistakes which men have made in the interpretation of the law of duty. Some of the greatest crimes in history have been perpetrated in the name of that law, and by men who honestly believed that they were acting in accordance with it. Indeed, we need not look to past history for examples of such mistakes. They meet us at every turn of our lives. It is hardly too much to say that half our social and political

and domestic troubles are caused by highly conscientious people; by people who are trying to do their duty, but who have some narrow or distorted notion of what their duty is. How often such people irritate and embarrass us, and make us almost disposed to regard conscientiousness as detracting from, rather than adding to, a man's social and personal usefulness. If the issues of life were only plain, if the forces of evil and good, of ignorance and enlightenment, of retrogression and progress, faced each other in clearly-defined ranks, our choice would be a simple one. We should know where to attach ourselves; we should be able to throw ourselves with whole-hearted confidence on the side of God and the good. As a well-disciplined army the forces of righteousness could march forth conquering and to conquer, conscious of their goal, seeing clearly the road which leads to it, assured of final victory.

But the actual situation with which we are confronted is a very different one. Many of the most bitter conflicts in which we find ourselves involved are between people who on both sides believe that the cause for which they are standing is just and good. Both sides may be right, probably neither is wholly right. But just so far as they both think that they are right, is the

quarrel between them likely to be bitter and irreconcilable.

How, then, are we to determine the "What" of duty? The question cannot be answered in the terms of any abstract formula. When Hedonists tell us that the rule of right conduct is that of enlightened self-interest, or when Kant tells us that we are to act in each particular set of circumstances as if our action were to be made the basis of a universal law, they merely translate the moral claim into a different language, but give us no help in dealing with the difficulty involved in its practical application. For they still leave us face to face with the questions, "What is our enlightened self-interest?" "What kind of action meets the requirements of universal law?" and neither of these is easier to answer than the original one. Aristotle's dictum carries us a step further. He declares that the criterion of right action is the judgment of the phronimos: of the man who, by constant practice in goodness, has developed his moral sense up to a point which enables him to recognise instinctively and immediately the right way of dealing with each set of circumstances as it arises. This answer seems at first sight attractive. Experience tells us that most moral decisions are, and have to be, made immediately

and instinctively, and not as the result of reasoned calculation. It tells us also that the better a man is the truer, as a rule, will his moral decisions be. So we are quite ready to accept the guidance of the phronimos, and to submit our judgment to his. But who is the phronimos? Whence does he come, and how is he to be trained? By what credentials is his authority supported? How are we to secure that he will be available when his help is needed? These questions still remain unanswered, and till they are answered the Aristotelian formula stands for little more than the assertion of the obvious truth that good men will do good, and that the better a man is the better will his conduct be.

Let us look at the facts for ourselves. Let us ask ourselves how we have obtained our own notions of right and wrong. These vary to some extent from man to man, but about the broad lines of right and wrong most of us are agreed. We all agree, for instance, that it is right to tell the truth, to be self-controlled, to be unselfish and kind to others. How has this agreement arisen? Whence have we derived these main articles, at any rate, of our common creed? Only one answer is possible to this question: we have derived them from the society in which

we have been born and bred. Had we been brought up under different social influences, it is quite possible that our ideas of right and wrong would have been quite different. There are whole races whose members see no harm in lying, or in lack of self-control, or in callousness to the sufferings and sorrows of their fellow-men. But no healthy-minded Englishman could think thus, mainly because he is an Englishman, because he has been brought up and trained under the influences of English society.

Hence it is quite true to say that morality is a social product. The moral faculty is common to all men, but the training of that faculty, the particular moral judgments that we make, are not its self-originated products. They depend upon our relations with our fellow-men, they are the outcome of a continuous effort on the part of the members of the society to which we belong to adjust their relations with each other in such a manner as will conduce most to their mutual advantage and well-being. It is an effort which begins from the moment the society is organised as a society; it is one which continues as long as the society is a living and, therefore, a progressive society. That is the point to emphasise. There is no finality in moral attainment. We never can arrive at

an absolute standard of right and wrong. At each successive stage of a nation's history that standard is, or ought to be, higher than it was at the preceding stage. Here in England, for instance, our notions of justice, of truth, of unselfishness, of humanity, of self-control ought to be clearer and wider than they were a century ago. What was good enough for our fathers ought not to be good enough for us. If we thought it was, if we were generally contented with our present moral attainments, there would be grave cause for anxiety about our social state. Life implies growth, a living society must be a progressive society. A society which has become morally stagnant is a society which is beginning to degenerate.

Now let us turn once more to our original question. The "What" of duty, our moral standards, our notions of right and wrong, are supplied to us by the society to which we belong. We don't arrive at them for ourselves by any intellectual process, or by any system of self-centred training. We receive them from our fellow-men, they form part of our common social heritage. Our life's duty consists in regulating our conduct by them, in discharging our special functions of social membership in accordance with them. If we do so conscientiously and thoroughly

we shall find that our personal standard becomes rather higher than the generally accepted one, that our notions of right and wrong gradually become clearer and richer than those current in the society of the time. We achieve some measure of personal progress, we are better and clearer-sighted men at the end of our lives than we were at the beginning, and these elements of personal progress, received back into the common social life from us, and from others who like us have been trying to do their duty, cause that life to be progressive too. The fact that our conventional standard of goodness is higher here in England than it was a century ago is due to the fact that during that century numbers of men, starting from the conventional standard of their time, advanced a little beyond it in their personal attainments, and to some extent forced the whole society to advance with them.

If, then, morality is a social product, if our moral standards are in the main those of the society to which we belong, it follows that the better a society is, and the higher the standards acknowledged in it, the better its members will be, and the higher their moral attainments. Moreover, if morality is a progressive thing, if the moral standards of each generation ought to be higher than those of the preceding genera-

tion, it follows that our personal moral growth is intimately dependent on our belonging to a progressive society; that is, a society which embodies the highest and therefore the most progressive kind of life.

Only one completely satisfactory answer, then, can be given to the question "What is my duty?" How am I to get clear notions of right and wrong, and to make those notions clearer and deeper as time goes on? This question can only be answered by pointing to a society in which the recognised moral standards are as high as possible under the conditions of the time, and which is animated by the highest and most progressive kind of life, and by telling the questioner that in this society he will find the moral guidance which he asks for; that by its corporate judgments he can correct his own; and that the more he identifies himself with its principles and takes an active share in its membership, the more rapid will his growth be in instinctive power of moral insight.

Now in the light of these considerations let us examine Christ's method of propagating the world movement which He came to inaugurate. This was, as I have pointed out, essentially a social movement. Its declared aim was the salvation of the whole human race through their

inclusion in a perfect society; through the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth. But though His aim was social, His primary method was intensely individual. He wholly rejected the methods of political revolution. He absolutely refused to have anything to do with the nationalist movement of the Jewish people of His day, though He might easily have become its leader. He impressed upon His disciples the duty of loyal submission to the constituted authorities, though those authorities were representatives of a foreign rule against which the mass of His fellow-countrymen were in hardly-veiled revolt. He attacked no social institutions, though some of the existing institutions, like that of slavery, were directly opposed to the principles of His teaching, and were bound to disappear when those principles became widely accepted. He organised no extensive schemes of philanthropic beneficence, though the air was clamorous with the cries of the needy and the suffering. But what He did was this. He carefully selected from the crowd of His hearers a small band of men who had the moral qualifications which He required, and on these men He concentrated His main attention. He kept them constantly about Him; He led them through wonderful experiences of different kinds; He

spoke to others in parables and hard sayings, but to them He explained the meaning of His words and work so far as He found them capable of understanding Him. In other words, His chief and constant endeavour was to attach these men personally to Himself, to surround them with His personal influence, and through the medium of that influence to pass on to them His own thoughts and principles and ideals and ways of regarding men and things. And He did all this with a definite purpose which He unfolded to them when their development had reached a certain point. He told them that as His Father had sent Him so He designed to send them. That they were to deal with others as He had dealt with them; to pass on to them what they had received from Him; to get into personal touch with them, and in the atmosphere of personal influence to train them and to teach them and to inspire them with the ideals and principles which they had learnt from Him.

But this was only one aspect of Christ's method, and by no means its most important aspect. If we described it merely as a method of external example and admonition our description would omit its most characteristic and vital feature. To understand what this is it will

be necessary to remind ourselves of the ultimate need to which it is relative; of the fourth great difficulty with which the life of obedience to conscience is encumbered—the greatest difficulty of all.

This is summarised in the question—"How am I to do my duty? How am I to overcome the resistance to duty-doing offered by my own lawless passions and desires? I cannot do this in my own strength. The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spiritual resources at my disposal are insufficient for its conquest. Unless these resources can be reinforced, the attempt to establish the supremacy of conscience is a futile one. I may be convinced of the rightfulness of that supremacy, of the Divine credentials by which it is supported, of the all-sufficing character of the results to which its effective recognition will lead. I may be convinced of all this, and I may know quite well in what direction on each particular occasion the path of duty lies; but to what advantage is all this conviction and knowledge if I cannot follow the path? If the good that I would I do not, the evil that I would not that I do?" This is the ultimate need of the soul—the need of power, of greater vitality and strength and energy. It is on the satisfaction of this need

that Christ's claim ultimately rests. "I came," He said, "that ye might have life"; and it is the experience of life recieved from Him, and received more and more abundantly, which gives to Christian faith that character of assured conviction which distinguishes it, and which places those who have attained it beyond the influence of intellectual doubt or emotional depression.

Under what conditions, then, does this experience arise? What is the strength by which Christ reinforces the moral resources of man's nature, and what means does He use for placing it at our disposal? The direction in which we naturally look for an answer to these questions is suggested by what has been already said. Men derive not only their moral illumination, but also their moral power, from the society in which they have been born and bred. Place a boy among deteriorating surroundings, let him be brought into constant personal contact with people of a degenerate and degraded moral type, and he will soon come to reflect in his character and disposition not merely their low views on moral questions, but also their moral weakness and instability. Let him be brought up, on the other hand, under healthy social influences, and we shall find that they will

have the effect not merely of clearing his moral vision, but also of strengthening his power of meeting the moral claim. It is a mysterious fact, this fact that we are dependent, not merely for our knowledge of what is right, but also for our power to do what is right, upon the society to which we belong; that this power passes into us from our fellow-men, instinctively and for the most part unconsciously; that after personal contact with a good man we can more easily do what is good; that after personal contact with a bad man we do it less easily. But that it is so is indubitable. Our whole system of moral and religious training proceeds on this presumption. Every one admits that in such training the character of the teacher matters much more than the formal lessons he gives. The latter may be appropriated by the intellect without producing any character results, but the former cannot fail to some extent to do so, and when the teacher has a strongly marked personality and gains the sympathy of his pupil, his influence in this respect is potent and determining. The stronger life seems, as it were, to pass over into the weaker or less developed, and to bring it to a large extent into conformity with its own principles and ideals. We can see the same phenomenon illustrated on a

larger scale in the powerful influence which the public opinion of a well-organised community exercises over its members; in the effect which a great crowd, swayed by some strong passion or enthusiasm, has even on those who were at first cynical or indifferent; in the rapidity with which, if we are at all sympathetic and impressionable, we assimilate the ways of thought and feeling of a foreign people among whom we reside. These are truisms of observation, but just because they are so their deep significance is apt to be overlooked. They bear unanswerable witness to the intensely social character of human life; to the fact that man is dependent on his fellow-men not merely for his external conveniences and acquirements, but also for the moral and spiritual resources on which he must depend for the development of his own personal character.

In the light of this fact, then, let us turn again to Christ's method of dealing with His disciples. They came to Him asking how they were to do their duty? How and whence they were to gain that reinforcement of moral strength without which they had learnt by experience that their moral efforts were bound to end in failure? How the life of their manhood, its highest and most characteristic form of life,

could be replenished up to the point at which it would become sufficiently vigorous to assimilate and incorporate into itself all lower forms? Christ told them that He Himself was the Source to which they must look. That He had come for the very purpose of passing on to them the life which they needed. That He "had come that they might have life, and more abundant life." And He told them that this life was His own personal life, at once human and divine; that it would pass over from Him into those who possessed certain qualifications of heart and will. And those so qualified soon found by experience that His words were true. They found that as they kept company with Him, His Personal Spirit gradually passed into theirs, and asserted His presence in their consciousness, not as an external influence, but as an incorporated part of the essential texture of their inmost being. They found that their very personality was being joined to Christ's by a living link, and being made an instrument for the expression of His activities.

But Christ told His immediate followers that this experience of theirs was but a presage and a foretaste of one much deeper and fuller. He told them that His power of giving Himself to them was limited not merely by their lack

of receptivity, but also by the conditions of His own earthly existence. In the higher existence to which He would pass through the gate of physical death these limitations would be removed, and He promised that He would then impart Himself to them in the fulness of His Incarnate life.

The history of the whole Christian movement is the story of the gradual fulfilment of His promise. Neither the outward results nor the inner character of that movement can be explained apart from this fact of the consciousness of the Indwelling Christ. As is the case with any ultimate fact of experience, this consciousness in itself is incapable of external definition or of external proof. For those who possess it, or are possessed by it, it carries its own definition and its own proof with it. To those who have not yet attained to it, its meaning cannot be explained, nor its reality proved, by any verbal statement. But though the consciousness itself transcends the external order, the historical conditions and outcome of its attainment belong to that order, and by studying them we can learn something of the method which Christ followed in satisfying man's need of moral power, and the lines along which He designed that those who

attained this satisfaction should pass it on to others.

In the first place, then, notice Christ's clear declaration that His power of meeting this need was limited by the conditions of His earthly existence. As I have already pointed out, whatever evidence we have at our disposal goes to show that the distinguishing difference between His earthly and His heavenly existence is to be found in the fact that in the former His body was subject to the restrictions of natural law, while in the latter it is free from those restrictions, and has become the completely adaptable instrument of spiritual purposes. If this be so, the spiritualising of His body is the antecedent condition of the fulfilment of His promise of the full outpouring of His Spirit, and it is through the agency of that spiritualised body that its fulfilment is achieved. But man's body is essentially a social instrument: all its different organs are relative to his social connection with, and dependence upon, his fellow-men; apart from such connection and dependence they would be meaningless and useless, they would lack any incentive to, or field of exercise for their activities. If, then, it is through the agency of His body, which does not cease to be a

human body because it is completely spiritualised, that Christ imparts His life to men, we are led to expect that His medium of communication will appear in history as a social medium, and its results as social results.

Secondly, we have the fact that this expectation is met and fully justified in the account which has been handed down to us of the first outpouring of the Spirit. Christ's faithful followers were gathered together when this event took place. They had already been socially organised. They already had officers, carefully selected and instructed, and vested with authority to rule and teach. They already had a definite ceremony of initiation into their fellowship, and another ceremony intended to keep them in constant remembrance of this fellowship. They already recognised the authoritative character of principles and precepts enunciated by Christ, which covered the whole field of personal and social activity. It was on the disciples thus organised that the Spirit was outpoured. It was no mere aggregation of inspired individuals that emerged from the Upper Chamber. They had entered it already bound together by social links. They left it welded together by the same links into a living whole. It was along the lines of its original

constitution that the Society at once began to develop its activities. The disciples at once began to live the common life, and to find their external centre of unity in the system of common worship and discipline and teaching which the Apostles administered. The inner unity of which this was the embodiment lay in their common consciousness of the Indwelling Presence. This consciousness from the first dominated them, and rapidly began to express itself in doctrinal and practical forms. They rapidly came to realise that in the most real and intimate sense of the words they formed Christ's Body, the organised instrument of His activities, and that their whole life's function was concerned with the due discharge of the duties which their special forms of membership involved.

These two facts, put together, point irresistibly to the conclusion that it was Christ's intention to convey His life to men, not by any transcendental process, but along those ordinary channels of social intercourse through which they receive their moral illumination and moral strength. That with this end in view He constituted His followers into a definite Society, which He equipped with all the necessary requirements of continuous, corporate life. That it was

on this Society as a whole that His Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost, and that, thus inspired and vitalised, it henceforth became the germinating centre of the World movement which is to consummate itself in the establishment of His Kingdom—the mustard seed destined to grow by gradually assimilating to itself the congenial elements in the soil of human life, till at length all those elements have become parts of its living texture.

I have said that neither the inner spirit nor the outer development of the Christian movement can be understood apart from this conception. Let me illustrate this statement by one or two examples which will be not the less useful because of their connection with questions of present-day interest and importance.

No doctrine has aroused more exacerbated controversy among Christians during the last four hundred years than that of the Real Presence of Christ in the Sacrament of the Holy Communion. Irreconcilable differences in their ways of regarding and defining this doctrine divided the theologians of the sixteenth century into opposing camps, and constituted one of the main causes of the disruption of organised Christendom which took place then, and from the disastrous effects of which the

Christian cause has suffered ever since. But the fact that Christ is present in the Holy Communion was never brought into question up to that time, nor was it denied then by the most prominent Reformers, though they rejected the current explanation of the fact. Moreover, if we look back to the writings of the great Fathers of the Church, we find numerous statements made by them which, taken by themselves, justify the most extreme sacramental theories of later times. But these statements must not be taken by themselves. They must be read in the whole context of thought and feeling in which they were made. To those who made them, the dominating conception of life was that of Christ's Real Presence. He was present in the whole Body, and therefore in every member and every ordinance of the Body. All its activities, all its rites and ceremonies, so far as they were normal outcomes of its life, were sacramental in character. Through them all alike the Indwelling Spirit manifested His Presence in outward form. The Holy Communion stood at the head of this sacramental system. Its direct institution by Christ Himself, its inclusion by Him in the original constitution of the Christian society, the essential purpose it served in the economy

of worship and edification, secured for it a place of conspicuous honour and esteem. It was the sacrament of sacraments, the type and pattern of all others, the most complete and perfect expression of the sacramental principle, the sacred vehicle through which Christ conveyed Himself in the fulness of His Incarnate Life to the members of His Body. But it did not stand in isolation. Its essential character was shared, not only by the great sacrament of initiation, but also by an indefinite and varying number of other ordinances; by every ordinance which subserved the needs of the Church's life. For that life is Christ's life, which passes along every link that binds the members of His Body together, and enables them to supply each others needs.

So long as the doctrine of the Real Presence in the Holy Communion remained in this context its acceptance was universal. No Christian could question it without questioning the wider doctrine which necessarily implied it. No Christian, none even of the leading heretics, did question it, for this wider doctrine is the root doctrine of the whole Christian way of life. It was when it was taken out of this context, and studied and defined apart from it, that controversy ~~gan to arise. It was when, formulated by

the mechanical methods of scholastic logic, it assumed a prescriptive and absolute character, that its detachment from, and apparent incongruity with, the main body of Christian truth were recognised by an awakened Christian intelligence, and thus gave rise to attempts at competing definitions. It was because these attempts were still made outside their true context, and were still dominated by the same mechanical methods, that their outcome has been controversy and division perpetuating themselves to the present day.

A very analogous controversy is that which centres round the closely allied doctrine of Sacerdotalism, and here again the stress of the controversy is mainly due to isolated treatment. The sacerdotal principle itself is closely intertwined with the whole Christian conception of life. It is difficult to see how this can be disputed by any one who accepts the fact of the Incarnation: the fact that God connects Himself with man through the instrumentality of the manhood of His Incarnate Son. The conception of the Christian life which flows from this fact is essentially sacerdotal in principle. If, as St Paul teaches, Christians are united to God through Christ in virtue of their membership in a living Body of which Christ is the Head, their union

with Him is at all points mediated and maintained by their union with their fellow-men, and this is Sacerdotalism in undiluted form. But the Pauline doctrine has reference to every member of the body. Every member is a priest, a mediator between God and his fellow-men, and his whole life's function consists in the due discharge of his priestly responsibilities. The character of these responsibilities varies from member to member, and is dependent upon that of the particular place assigned to each in the organised system of the Body's life. It was natural, then, that when this place was one of special dignity and importance, those who occupied it should be regarded as expressing the main principle of that life in a special degree. So it came that the particular class of members to whom were assigned the essential functions of ministering to the spiritual needs, and administering the discipline, of the whole Body acquired the priestly title as their official designation. But their right to the title was in no sense regarded as exclusive. It was shared by all members of the Body alike. They all exercised the priestly office in discharging their respective functions: they were all alike men consecrated, set apart, to minister God's gifts to their fellow-men. This did not at all mean

that their functions were interchangeable at will; that any member, for instance, could act as an official priest without being called to do so by lawful authority. Such interchangeability would be inconsistent with the necessary conditions of organised life. But it did mean that the priest who from the altar table feeds the children of the household with the sacred Body and Blood, is no more a priest, and no less a priest, than he who ministers to their physical or intellectual needs in his workshop or his study. They are both alike consecrated agents through whom God bestows His gifts, and their own well-being and that of the whole Body depend upon the extent to which they recognise the character of their vocation and freely co-operate with Christ in discharging the responsibilities which it entails.

The attack on the sacerdotal principle is an attack on Christianity itself, for that principle belongs to the essence of the Christian conception of life; but its defence must be sedulously disentangled from the assertion of exclusive and absolute claims made by, or on behalf of, any particular class of members. The restoration of the unity of Church life can only be achieved through that of its true spiritual context and point of view. We shall then find that what we

want is not less Sacerdotalism, but much more; to level up, not to level down. On the day when every member of the Body recognises the claims and responsibilities of his priestly vocation as intensely as the most conscientious official priest recognises them now, the sacerdotal controversy will be at an end. So long as this recognition is limited to one particular class of members the controversy is bound to continue, or, worse still, to eventuate in widespread apathy and indifference.

These two examples sufficiently illustrate the statement that the doctrinal development of early Christianity can only be understood when studied in the context of the consciousness prevalent among the members of the Church of the Presence of the Indwelling Christ. The same statement holds good with regard to the rapid extension of the Church's membership. The Church was constituted by Christ to be the means through which His purpose of the establishment of His Kingdom would gradually be achieved. It was to be the germ and microcosm of that Kingdom, and the final end to which its existence was relative was to be attained by a process of gradual organic growth. As a seed grows through assimilating to itself materials from the soil and atmosphere,

so the Church was to grow by gradually incorporating into its membership suitable material from the surrounding world of men. This process of assimilation Christ compared to the action of leaven on a lump of dough. The Church was to be the leaven centre of His life, which would pass from it to those who were capable of receiving it, just as it passed from Him to His first disciples through the medium of His human body. It would be received by them at first unconsciously and instinctively. It would not be till the results of its reception began to make themselves apparent in their outward conduct and inward experience that consciousness would arise, and lead through reflection to intelligent apprehension and conviction. This, according to Christ's declared intention, was to be the normal process of extension—a process of organic growth. The seed sown growing silently and secretly at first, after a time forcing its shoots upwards into the daylight of self-conscious thought, and there gradually arraying itself with the glories of its full development.

History bears clear witness to the fact that this has been the actual process of extension in all the vital and progressive periods of the Church's career. Take, for example, the first of these periods—the most vital and progressive of all.

Modern research has added much to our knowledge of what took place during those wonderful centuries. We can discern with some approach to clearness how it came about that the little band of humble men and women who issued from the Upper Chamber on the first Whitsunday, inaugurated an organised movement which the greatest Empire of ancient times tried in vain to suppress, and with which it had at length to come to unwilling terms. It was not through intellectual arguments that this movement prevailed: the intellectual forces of the world were at first arrayed against it; philosophers and learned men for many a year were disposed to regard it with contempt. Nor were its weapons those of emotional appeal. Even in their intercourse with each other the early Christians seem to have been restrained in emotional expression; towards the outer world they maintained an attitude of strict reserve with regard to their religious beliefs and practices. Nor, again, was it aided by the artistic attractiveness of stately forms of worship. It was not till more settled times had come that there was any possibility of architectural or ritual development. The real explanation of the Church's triumph must be looked for elsewhere. It is to be found in the type of life displayed

by her members. The true men of the time, the men whose soul ears and eyes were open, were sick and tired of the gross sensuality and selfishness with which their social surroundings were charged. They wanted something better and nobler, something in which the needs of which they had become conscious could find their satisfaction. And they found that something in their very midst. They found there little groups of devoted men related to each other as members of a united family are, caring for their poor, tending their sick, teaching their ignorant, consigning their dead with reverent hopefulness to the grave. They found that these beneficent activities were not self-centred, but were placed freely at the disposal of those outside. And so they were attracted, and the attraction grew stronger, till at length it proved irresistible. One by one they were swept into the current, one by one they were constrained to identify themselves openly with a perilous and persecuted cause, but which they had come to see was the only cause worth living or dying for. They had touched Christ's Body, and His Life had passed through it into theirs. Henceforth they recognised that they were no longer their own; that it was Christ who was working in them and acting through them.

Such, then, is Christ's method of meeting the two ultimate moral needs with which this chapter is concerned—the need of moral illumination and of moral strength. It is no strange and unexpected method. Its principle belongs to the essential constitution of human life as we know it. Experience shows that men are dependent for their moral insight and power upon the society to which they belong, and that any individual progress they achieve is received back by the society and placed by it at the disposal of succeeding generations. Christ took these facts as His starting-point. He began with that which is natural and led on through it to that which is spiritual. His own moral insight and power, which are those of God Himself, were in the first instance placed at the disposal of men through the medium of His human body — through the medium, that is, of a physical organism essentially social in character and purpose, an organism which connected Him by a network of intertwined relationships with every member of the human race, and enabled His personality to come into communication with theirs. Those who were capable of receiving His gifts, those who were conscious of their moral needs and could therefore appreciate and appropriate the satisfaction

which He offered, gradually became conscious of their vital union with Him and each other; and as this consciousness deepened, they came to recognise that their union depended upon, and sprang from, their common participation in His life. Thus already His Body had begun to extend itself; even during His earthly sojourn His Personality had acquired further means of expression besides those provided by His physical organism; He had already begun to act on the world of men through the medium of His Church —a definite, visible society provided by Him with the necessary equipment of organised and progressive social life. The transformation of His physical organism, which was effected by its passage through the episode of physical death, its complete emancipation from the limitations of physical law, and its complete adaptation to spiritual purposes, left Him free to identify Himself fully with this society, to incorporate Himself in it in the fulness of His Incarnate life. Thus on the Day of Pentecost the Church became His Body in the fullest sense of the term: the organised medium through which His life henceforth was to express its activities, the leaven centre from which it was to spread through the world of men. It was this Church, thus equipped and endowed, which He placed

over against man's ultimate moral needs. Experience had already shown them that these needs could only be satisfied through social means. Christ provided such means, and it was because they found that these, duly used, answered the purpose for which they were designed; that the life of active Church membership was one of growing moral illumination and power; it was for ultimate reasons such as these, that they threw in their lot unreservedly with the Church's cause, and counted as gain the sufferings which the propagation of that cause involved.

CHAPTER IX

THE CHURCH'S CONTINUITY AND FREEDOM

THE conception of the Church outlined in the preceding chapter carries with it certain conclusions as to her character and claims which the conditions of religious life here in England invest with great practical importance. It may be worth while to devote a chapter to the brief discussion of two of the most prominent of these.

In the first place, then, it carries with it the conclusion that the Church is a *visible* society. The theory of an invisible Church, of a Church whose membership is limited to the "saved," to those who are conscious of their vital union with Christ, came into prominence in the sixteenth century, and has exercised a powerful influence over the subsequent development of religious thought. It was the direct product of the movement of religious individualism which acquired such power then. It represented an attempt to reconcile the principle of that move-

ment with express statements in the New Testament writings which are incongruous with it. But the attempt is an impossible one: an invisible society is a contradiction in terms. Social life can only arise when a number of men recognise themselves as bound to each other by certain positive obligations, and as the life develops this recognition is bound to express itself in positive institutions and positive laws. A man is a member of the society just so far, and only so far, as he conforms to these institutions and obeys these laws. He is recognised by other members, and marked off from those who are not members, by such conformity and obedience; by definite and distinctive ways of life and conduct. His personal feelings and convictions may or may not cause him thus openly to declare himself, but until they do so they constitute no social relationship between him and his fellowmen. A man may be perfectly convinced of his own personal union with Christ: he can attain to no similar certainty with regard to his neighbours. He can only judge of his neighbour's spiritual state by its outward results; by the expression given to it in his speech or conduct. But such expression affords no infallible test of its real character. The speech may be insincere, the conduct may be directed by concealed motives

of an unworthy kind. So the theory of an invisible Church is relative to a conception of Christianity which reduces it to a religion of pure individualism. Certain theologians are prepared to carry the theory to this logical conclusion. Professor Harnack, for instance, tells us that Christianity in its ultimate essence is solely concerned with the relation between God and the individual soul, the individual soul and God. The individual may be convinced that in his particular case the relation is a vital one, and the personal experience which is the ground of this conviction may lead him to infer that what is true of him is true of others as well. But if he cannot tell with any certainty who these others are, it is plain that his relations with his fellow-Christians, however useful and edifying, do not belong to the essential texture of his conscious religious life. In a higher state of existence the case may be different. Real Church life can begin where we see our fellow-men as God now sees them, and can discern His life working in them. But under the limitations of earthly existence our capacity for such discernment is weak and fallible. So the human soul must pursue its course alone; it must enter into the Presence Chamber alone; it must make its peace with God alone; it must work out its appointed

destiny alone. The soul and God, God and the soul, here religion begins and here it ends.

I need not point out how inadequate such a description is when applied to the Christian religion, as it has been taught and practised for the last eighteen hundred years. It is quite impossible to vindicate it without a wholesale repudiation of the historical facts which have hitherto been regarded as forming the basis of the Christian faith. Clear-sighted theologians like Professor Harnack see that this is so, and openly declare that the authenticity of these facts is not a matter of primary religious importance; that the Gospel narrative is important solely because of its clear witness to God's Fatherhood, but that the character of the outer medium through which this truth was conveyed is not a matter which need concern us much. If the whole narrative were proved to be a fabrication of a later age its religious value would be undiminished. Its real appeal is to man's spiritual nature, and the response to that appeal depends, not on the external witness by which it is supported, but on its congruity with his ultimate needs and aspirations.

Religious individualists in this country seldom go these lengths. They either do not see clearly the conclusions implicit in their premisses, or

when they do see them they are deterred from drawing them by the potent influence which historical Christianity, and the institutions and practices in which it has embodied itself, still exercise even over those who have dissociated themselves from its movement. So they only go half-way. They accept the fact of a historical Incarnation, and defend their acceptance by extrinsic arguments. But they treat it to a large extent as an isolated fact, and refuse to acknowledge the extension of its principle in a visible Church. The numerous references to such a Church contained in the New Testament they meet with the theory to which I have referred; that is to say, they try to explain them by explaining them away. They apparently do not see that almost every argument which they use to prove that the Church of Christ is an invisible society, would be equally applicable as proofs that His human body was also invisible, that He was not a historical character, or, at any rate, that it was a matter of unimportance whether He was or not. In short, it is not too much to say that the principle involved in the doctrine of a visible Church is so vital, and so ultimate, that its rejection must sooner or later lead to the rejection of Christianity itself as a historical revelation.

Granted, then, that the Church is a visible society, it is plain that the maintenance of its identity must depend upon institutional continuity. If it started with a certain system of government and administration, its existing system must be derived by legitimate and constitutional succession from this. If it started with certain positive ordinances of a universal and obligatory character, this obligation must still be acknowledged. If it started with certain fundamental principles of thought and conduct, its recognised principles must include these, and include nothing which is inconsistent with them. Every society is bound sooner or later to express and safeguard the continuity of its life in this threefold way. How soon it does so depends upon the rapidity of the development of its social self-consciousness. But the Christian society started with this consciousness already developed. Its first members were intensely conscious of the unity of the social life in which they shared. Moreover, this consciousness was not left free to express itself in suitable institutions and ordinances, as it undoubtedly would almost at once have done. These were provided by the Founder of the Society in a definite and positive form. It started with two great positive ordinances,

participation in which was obligatory on all its members. It started with a definite body of facts and principles of a fundamental character. It started with certain officers definitely authorised and empowered to regulate the administration of these ordinances, and the tradition of these facts and principles, and to act as the head centres of its judicial and legislative activities. Any society, then, which claims identity with the Society founded by Christ can only make its claim good to the extent to which it can vindicate its institutional continuity in these respects.

The majority of Christians admit the validity of this requirement up to a certain point. They admit that any religious body which dispenses with the use of the two great Sacraments, or which repudiates any of the main articles of the Christian Creed, cannot be regarded as forming part of the Christian Church. But the agreement is by no means so general with regard to the maintenance of the principle involved in Christ's direct appointment of the first rulers of the Church: the principle that authority to rule, and teach, and judge, must come from above, not from below, and that, therefore, no man can legitimately exercise such authority unless it has been delegated to

him by those already invested with it. Around these points much controversy has arisen, controversy which is still often acrimonious and acute. Into its troubled waters I have no wish to enter here. It would serve no good purpose to reiterate arguments already voiced by able advocates. For, indeed, no controversy of this kind can be resolved by arguments, however cogent and convincing they may seem to be to those who use them. Before this very desirable end can be attained, the belligerents must be brought into friendly relations, and be ready to appreciate each other's point of view. The path to a final settlement would be immeasurably shortened if this condition were once established.

Its first outcome would be a mutual acknowledgment, frankly made. On the one side, those who stand for the principle of an apostolic ministry would acknowledge that the acceptance of that principle has often been made almost impossibly difficult. There have been times when to accept it would have been to take one's stand on the side of autocracy in Government, of lethargy and worldliness in religion, of exclusiveness and moral laxity in social life. However much we Churchmen may deplore the existence of Nonconformity here in England,

we cannot deny that its existence is due quite as much to the fault of the Church as to the wilfulness of those who seceded from her fold. We cannot deny, for instance, that the seventeenth-century Puritans had some justification for believing that personal and political freedom could only be attained through secession, or that the eighteenth-century Methodists were practically forced to choose between it and religious deadness. Had we ourselves lived in either of these eras, only exceptionally far-sighted and clear-sighted conviction could have enabled us to remain true to the Church's cause.

On the other side, Nonconformists would acknowledge that the principle of Sectarianism is no longer capable of defence; that it has been tried and found wanting; that Christianity can never hope to exercise its due influence over human society so long as Christians are grouped in mutually opposing camps; that our religious divisions and controversies constitute one of the chief impediments to the establishment of Christ's kingdom among men. The best Nonconformists already recognise this. They see plainly that our chief need at the present day is a great united organised Christian movement. They are, as a consequence, drawing much nearer to

each other and showing an increasing willingness to co-operate with each other. That such co-operation seems often to be dominated by a spirit of hostility to the Church must not blind us to the thoroughly healthy and hopeful character of the tendency which lies behind it. It is hardly too much to say that in the establishment of the Free Church Council as a head centre of organisation, and in the tacit acceptance of undenominationalism as a common standard of religious belief, we can discern the beginning of a movement which is capable of finding its complete expression in the constitution and creeds of the Catholic Church. For, on the one hand, united organised action implies discipline: and discipline implies authority: and authority will be undisputed, and therefore effective, just to the extent to which the source from which it is derived is one which men acknowledge to be capable of conferring it. And, on the other hand, any statement of the essential principles of the Christian faith arrived at by mutual agreement between professing Christians is likely to be adequate and accurate in proportion to the range and character of its acceptance. Tested by this standard it is difficult to see how any statement, however carefully devised, can be preferred to that contained in

the Catholic Creeds. The circumstances under which those Creeds arose invest them with quite unique significance and authority. They were the gradual outcome of a life-and-death struggle; of the struggle of the Church to maintain the integrity of her life against alien influences of a most subtle and pervasive and far-reaching kind. It was the incidence of this struggle which aroused her to intellectual self-consciousness. She was forced by it to examine her foundation facts and principles; to distinguish what was essential in them from what was merely incidental; to define the former in suitable terms, and to amplify these terms when the development of anti-Christian thought made it necessary further to safeguard their meaning. The process took over three centuries to effect: three centuries of strenuous thought and consideration and controversy, in which the whole Church, directly or indirectly, took its share. During no period since then has the Christian intellect had to deal with theological questions of anything like the same depth and complexity and variety. But the final result arrived at was accepted by the Church with practical unanimity. The Nicene symbol at once took its place as the authoritative and exhaustive summary of the essential articles of the Christian faith, and has

ever since retained that place in the estimation of the great majority of Christians. Does it not stand to reason that a statement carrying with it such credentials of origin and acceptance is more likely to be true, both inclusively and exclusively, than one which owes its origin to local circumstances and more or less transitory needs?

The tendency in modern Nonconformity to which I have referred, the tendency to organised union on the basis of common belief, is all to the good. We Churchmen have every reason to hope that it will strengthen itself. The day may come, and that before very long, when it will be possible to suggest that the considerations of which it is the outcome cannot have been absent from the mind of the Founder of Christianity; that He must have foreseen how intimately the success of the religious movement which He came to inaugurate would depend on organised union among His followers, and that it is, at any rate, probable that He made provision accordingly.

Let this expectation once be aroused, and we may feel fairly confident that a careful study of the New Testament documents will gradually produce the conviction that it is fully justified; that, as a matter of fact, Christ did make such

provision, and that, therefore, the principles which we Churchmen set such store by emanate from Him, and belong to the essential texture of the world movement which is to find its consummation in the establishment of His Kingdom among men.

Of course a change of view of this radical character cannot be effected in a day. Meanwhile, the duty of Churchmen is plain. While holding firmly by our own principles we must see to it that we express them in such a manner as will dissociate them from anything approaching to a spirit of arrogance or exclusiveness. Let us make it quite clear that our inability to work together with large numbers of our fellow-Christians for directly religious objects is due, not to prejudice, but to principle; not to any lack of appreciation of the pressing need for organised co-operation, but to the conviction that such co-operation can only be secured permanently and effectively along certain lines which we believe to have been laid down by Christ Himself. Let us state this soberly and quietly, and though many a long day may have to pass before we can expect to convince those who now disagree with us, we shall at any rate do much to mitigate bitterness and to develop mutual respect, and thus to establish conditions

on which the success of any movement in the direction of corporate reunion very largely depends.

The second characteristic of Church life to which I have referred is that of *freedom*. The Church must have freedom to develop her own distinctive life according to its own distinctive laws. This claim for freedom goes very deep: it belongs to the very essence of the Christian view of man. It would be overstating the case to say that man's recognition of his personal responsibility is of Christian origin; it is, indeed, part of the original equipment of human nature; but it certainly has developed enormously under Christian influences, and has been the chief determining factor in Christian civilised progress. Even in the highest civilisations of the ancient world the recognition was altogether subservient to that of the claim of the community. The individual was regarded, and regarded himself, almost solely in his relation to the social organism of which he was a member. He had no rights against the State; there was no province in his life for which he could claim exemption from State control. Doubtless, in practice, individuals asserted such rights and claimed such exemption with varying degrees of success. But they could find no justification for doing so in the prevalent

political and social theories of the times. Plato, for instance, the greatest of the ancient philosophers, based all his political speculations on the assumption of the complete subordination of the individual to the State.

But Christ's appeal starts from a very different assumption. It starts from the assumption that in the most intimate and important concerns of life State control is illegitimate, and cannot be tolerated. That there is a province in every man's life, the inmost province of all, in which he stands responsible to God alone, and that in this province, therefore, he must be left free to discharge his responsibility. Doubtless even here his freedom is a regulated freedom: it is still conditioned by his relations to his fellow-men. But these are of a different order to those in which he stands to the secular State. They are free relations, voluntarily accepted by him. The Church is a society of men who, starting from a common recognition of their responsibilities to God as revealed in Christ, have voluntarily associated themselves together with the view of discharging them. The same religious freedom which the individual Christian claims for himself he must claim for this society. In its own distinctive province it cannot, consistently with the very purpose for

which it exists, acknowledge the legitimacy of external interference or control. This is the principle laid down by Christ in the words—"Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to God the things that are God's." They were epoch-making words. They involved the repudiation of absolutism in Government, and from that repudiation has sprung our whole modern conception of personal liberty. Man's life according to the Christian view is subject not to one authority but to two—to the Society which he enters by a physical process over which he has no control, and to which he owes obligations which he is not free to reject; and to the Church—a society with which he can associate himself freely, and from which he can dissociate himself with equal freedom. Doubtless authority of every kind is derived from God. But Christ's teaching, indeed, the base assumption from which that teaching starts, is that God relates Himself to man in a twofold way, by laws, on the one hand, which his fellow-men can rightly compel him to obey, and by laws, on the other hand, to which obedience must be freely rendered if it is to be acceptable.

The social and political results which the acceptance of this teaching has involved have been of the most momentous and far-reaching

importance. From it has sprung, as I have said, our whole modern conception of personal liberty, and the progressive civilisation of which that conception has been the inspiring principle. When the early Christians faced persecution and death rather than admit, even in a formal manner, the right of the State to religious authority; when the Popes of the Middle Ages defended their prerogatives against the invasion of the temporal sovereigns of the times; when our own Puritans repudiated the authority of the State Church, enforced by State penalties, they were all alike fighting the battle of personal liberty. They were not indeed consciously fighting it. Neither primitive Christians nor Popes nor Puritans had, as a rule, any higher conception of such liberty than their opponents. They were equally ready to enforce the authority for which they stood by coercive means. When they got the upper hand they showed small tenderness for others' rights of conscience. But the principle involved in these different struggles was the same, and it was one of vital importance. Absolutism in Government, whether exercised by Church or State, is fatal to personal liberty. The maintenance of this liberty is dependent on the recognition that man is subject to a two-fold authority. That the State—the organised

expression of man's necessary outward relations with his fellow-men — and the Church — the organised expression of his voluntary inner relations—can in their respective provinces rightfully claim his loyalty and obedience, and that all true progress, whether personal or social, depends on the interaction between these two claims, on his rendering to each the allegiance which is its due.

The boundary line between the two provinces is by no means clearly defined. It is not always easy to tell where the rights of the State end and those of the Church begin, or *vice versâ*. Moreover, the answer to this question varies to some extent from age to age. Considerable departments of activity, for instance, which in Mediæval, or even in later times, were regarded as coming under the Church's jurisdiction, have now been assigned unreservedly to that of the State. The prevalent tendency at the present time is in the direction of the extension of this process; of the concentration in the hands of the State of functions which have hitherto been left to voluntary effort. But there are strong undercurrents of an opposite kind which, if they assert themselves, may reverse the process. The existence of such counter tendencies is the mark of a progressive society; indeed, all social progress

is dependent on their existence. It is the outcome of the interaction between the principle of personal freedom, and that of obligatory law. If either principle acquires undisputed supremacy in a society's life progress ends. In the one case that life tends to disintegrate into anarchy; in the other, to atrophy into mechanism.

So the struggle between Church and State, the organised expression of this interaction, can never end till the Kingdom of Heaven is established on earth. Questions regarding their respective functions are bound to arise, and ought to arise, in every living and progressive society; it would not be living and progressive if they did not.

These considerations have far more than an academic interest. There is reason to believe that some of the questions which are most hotly debated among us here in England at the present time would lose much of their controversial bitterness if they were placed in the context of their clear appreciation. If the Education and Marriage Law questions, for instance, could be discussed on this level, how much easier it would be to deal with them without rancour or misunderstanding. To intelligent Churchmen the ultimate principle involved in both these questions is that

of religious liberty, and it is quite impossible for them to acquiesce in any arrangement which flagrantly violates this principle. This they contend would, in the first case, be the effect of an arrangement which places the State imprimatur on a particular form of religious instruction devised by it, and which penalises those to whom such instruction is not acceptable. In the second case a similar situation would arise if the State attempted to force the Ministers of the Church to administer her Sacraments to persons who had contracted marriage relations, the legitimacy of which she does not acknowledge. They may be right or they may be wrong in their contention, but even those who think them wrong would, once they understood their position, acknowledge that their opposition to such arrangements is likely to be of a permanent and pertinacious character. An acknowledgment of the kind would in itself make for peace. Sensible statesmen would pause before making an attempt, which experience proves has never been successfully made, to overcome opposition based on religious conviction by high-handed means, or to conciliate it by some compromise which ignores its main objection. When compromise is possible it is

generally desirable, but a compromise which demands a fundamental change in men's religious point of view is neither possible nor desirable; it can only result in accentuating the divisions which it is designed to heal.

CHAPTER X

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

THE Christian life is the life of duty expressed in its highest terms. Its master-note is that of submission to authority. A man is a Christian just so far as he lives in the constant consciousness of his responsibility to a Higher Power whose claims are all inclusive, and who, through the revelation of Jesus Christ, has placed at his disposal definite and authorised means of discovering what those claims are, and of directing his different activities in accordance with them.

The Christian life is man's natural life. For conscience lays claim to absolute and complete supremacy over all the other faculties with which he is naturally endowed. It issues imperative commands and refuses to be satisfied with anything less than implicit obedience. He may stifle its voice, or refuse to attend to it, but when that voice is heard its accents are always the same. Thus every man carries

within himself a witness that he can only attain the true ends of his being by conformity to the requirements of authoritative law; a witness whose testimony he cannot disregard without being untrue to himself.

The appeal of Christianity is limited to those who are thus true to themselves. By them and them alone can it be accepted, for they and they alone have become conscious of the needs to which it is relative: and the more intense this consciousness becomes, the more readily will they recognise the completeness of the satisfaction which it affords. Brought face to face with the exigencies of practical life, it meets their requirements in a unique degree.

This recognition of satisfaction expresses itself in two conspicuous ways. It expresses itself in a sense of *completeness*. The Christian finds that the life with which he has identified himself is a complete life: that its principle is applicable to the whole range of human activity, not merely to isolated departments of it. Regarded from the Christian standpoint the character of any particular kind of work depends upon its inner motive, not upon its outer form. Thus any work becomes religious if it is done with a religious motive. The man whose sole motive is obedience to the

Divine command, whose sole aim is to do his duty in that particular place and station to which it shall please God to call him, is acting quite as religiously when engaged in his domestic or business avocations, as he would be when teaching a Sunday School class or singing in a church choir. There is no distinction in kind, though there may be in degree, between the work of a layman and of a clergyman; between that of the man whose obedience takes the form of ministering to the physical and social needs of his fellow-men, and of the man who is set apart to minister to their more direct devotional needs. They are both alike priests, men commissioned and consecrated for the discharge of an assigned function in God's organised system of service and supply.

And it expresses itself in a sense of *freedom*. The Christian life is a free life. Freedom is unthinkable in the sense of independence of law. Man is bound, by the very constitution of his nature, to be controlled by law of some kind. His freedom is one of choice. He can, if he chooses, refuse to be bound by the law of physical necessity: he can rise above it, and identify himself with a higher law which will gradually enable him to dominate it, and to transform it into a fitting instrument for its

own expression. Just so far as he does so he becomes a free man. "Thou hast set me at liberty," says the Psalmist, "because I have obeyed Thy law." His words convey a profound truth. The region of freedom can only be entered through the gate of submission, and the Christian life claims to be the only completely free life, just because it is the life of complete submission to the Divine will.

Two illustrations may help to make the meaning of this claim clear. Life lived at any lower level is embarrassed by fear of failure. A mere philanthropist, for instance, is not fully free to carry out his plans for the betterment of his fellow-men, because he cannot be sure that the end he has in view will really be attained by them; that their result will not be to make burdens heavier rather than lighter. Experience proves that the best intentioned philanthropic plans have not seldom ended thus: that much of the time and energy and money spent in such projects have not merely been wasted, but have been of distinct and even disastrous disadvantage to those they were intended to benefit. But failure is not possible to the Christian. The cause with which he has identified himself is sure in the long run to prevail. The particular part in promoting it

which has been assigned to him may end in apparent failure, but if he has played that part loyally and well, he can be assured that the failure is only apparent, a step forward in the development of a plan which he cannot yet understand, and is not called to understand. It is his business to obey orders: to do as God wills, not less and not more. The final results are in His hands, whose ways are past finding out. He is content to leave them there, in the full assurance that all things work together for good to those who have identified their wills with His. Look at Christ's own life. Tested by the standard of immediate results, no life could have ended in more disastrous failure: a world partly contemptuous, partly hostile, a few half-hearted followers, a fanatic mob howling Him to a malefactor's death. Yet the experience of eighteen hundred years has proved that this apparent failure was the highest triumph; that from the life which apparently ended then in desolation and darkness has sprung the highest and most progressive civilisation the world has ever seen; and those who have come under the conscious influence of that life will further testify that it still contains resources which, if properly appreciated and appropriated and applied, are capable of carrying on modern

progress until it consummates itself in the establishment of God's Kingdom on earth.

A second limitation to man's freedom is to be found in his constant consciousness of the claims of self: in his constant and instinctive tendency to test his work by the extent to which it satisfies those claims; by the extent to which it promotes his own popularity, or pleasure, or success. "Self-consciousness," as some one says, "is the mud in the stream of human effort," the defiling element which destroys its beauty, and sweetness, and attractiveness. But self-consciousness is of the very essence of intelligent life; man cannot rid himself of it without self-destruction. Nor can the claims of self be met by any selfless ideal; by any abstract principle, however intellectually or morally unassailable. The attempt has been made again and again, but it has never been successful. It never can be successful, for self-expression, not self-repression, is the true law of human life, and any philosophy or religion which does not pay full regard to that law is untrue to the facts with which it professes to deal. There is only one way in which this end can be attained. The man must be brought into living contact with a Higher Self, in which all his own possibilities are fully realised. He

must find himself there: himself, not as he is, but as he ought to be, and as he has it in him to be. The claims of this Higher Self in no way interfere with his freedom of action and development. They are still the claims of self, but of self found in Christ and of Christ found in self. The man whose life is dominated by the answer to the question, "Lord, what wouldest Thou have me to do?" is subject to no mere external allegiance. The Christ whom he serves is the Christ who works in him and acts through him. In the very act of losing himself he has found himself again: himself as he potentially is, and is one day destined to be.

The Christian life, once more, just because it is man's natural life, is a supernatural life. For man is naturally supernatural: the powers with which he is endowed can only find their full expression and field of exercise in an order of things transcending that of the natural world. A strongly marked distinction is sometimes drawn between the religious life and that of mere morality, but if the description of Christianity given in the preceding pages is true, such a distinction cannot be maintained. The moral life is related to the Christian life as the seed to the plant which springs from it. The man who tries to do his duty consistently

and intelligently and progressively is bound sooner or later to become a Christian. He will find that he cannot meet the growing claims of conscience without the aid of the resources which Christianity alone can place at his disposal. He will find, further, that these resources, duly made use of, will gradually awaken consciousness of needs of a mysterious and transcendental kind, and gradually provide them also with their appropriate satisfaction. For the law to which he has given his allegiance is the ultimate law of God's own life. In identifying himself with it, he is joining the slender current of his life's efforts with that great stream of loving purpose which keeps the stars in their courses, which guides the destinies of the ages, which one day will consummate itself in a new heaven and a new earth. The soul-thirst for the living God points to, and can only be satisfied by, personal union with Him. But personal union between two intelligent beings means union of their wills, for the will is of the essence of the personality, and the initial indications of the trend of God's will are conveyed to each man through the dictates of his conscience.

The primary responsibility which lies on us Christians is that of passing on to others the life in which we ourselves share. We are placed

in the world to be its leaven centres: it is through our means that Christ's purpose is to be achieved for the world of men. How are we to discharge this responsibility to the best advantage? What lines of organised action are indicated by Christ's own teaching and example, and by the nature of the gifts which He has committed to our stewardship? We are confronted, just as He was, with a great mass of indifference and worldliness and spiritual obtuseness. How are we dealing with it? We are also brought into contact with many souls possessing the qualifications which He required —souls alert, and active, and anxious, and ready to respond. Are they being brought into living touch with Christ through our means? If not, why not? Is it our presentation of His claim which is at fault?

These are serious questions, the most serious questions which any Christian can ask himself. We are not concerned with results, our sole concern is to obey. The apparent delay in the coming of Christ's Kingdom here in England may be in accordance with His will; it may be merely a time of secret growth, the preparation for a great advance. The history of the Christian Church shows that such periods have been of regular recurrence. There is no reason

to be disturbed if we find that our life's lot is cast in one of these. If Christ is content to wait, so may we. But there is every reason to be disturbed if the delay is due to our perversity or self-will. About this matter deep heart-searchings are necessary. True obedience implies not only zeal, but zeal with knowledge. Our co-operation with Christ must be regulated by His method, not by self-devised methods of our own.

The general character of this method has been indicated in the preceding pages. How does it compare with those usually employed at the present day? That is a question which deserves our closest and most earnest attention. It is much to be desired that some one of sufficient experience and intelligence would give it such attention, and place at our disposal the results of his enquiries. I may be mistaken, but I cannot help having an uneasy suspicion that if he did so he would bring to light discrepancies of a very serious kind; discrepancies sufficient to account to some extent for the comparatively small progress which the Christian cause seems to be making here in England.

The full discussion of the grounds for this suspicion would need a volume to itself. It may be worth while, however, before I conclude, to suggest very briefly one or two leading questions

which I should like to see asked, and one or two of the chief reasons why I find a difficulty in answering them satisfactorily.

Christ's method, as I have pointed out, was intensely individual. He was very kind to the people who came flocking round Him: He fed them, He comforted them, and healed their diseases. But when it came to definite religious appeal and teaching, His attitude towards them was one of great caution and reserve. He made His teaching difficult rather than easy for them. He unfolded the mysteries of His Kingdom only to a small band of carefully selected men, and to them very gradually. How does His method in this respect compare with those of a good many modern missioners and revivalists? Is the plan defensible of getting together heterogeneous crowds, and speaking to them quite freely on just those topics which Christ was so reticent about?

Christ demanded certain qualifications in His hearers; He declared again and again that those who did not possess them were incapable of receiving His message. How far are we justified in delivering that message without any such preliminary test? If, as I have tried to show, the essential qualification which He required was the active recognition of the supremacy of conscience, is it wise, is it even

permissible, for us to attempt suddenly to Christianise men and women whose moral sense is dormant, or even depraved? Did He not Himself directly forbid any such attempts when He warned His disciples against giving that which is holy to the dogs, or casting their pearls before swine?

Christ's teaching cannot be fairly described either as emotional or intellectual. Doubtless, it stirred the emotions of those who received it; doubtless, too, it informed and inspired their intellectual powers. But it was to their consciences and wills that it was addressed. When it failed to elicit an effective response there He evidently regarded it as teaching thrown away. Can we honestly say that this principle is recognised by the majority of our religious teachers and preachers at the present day?

Christ's method was that of the leaven. His life passed from Him to His immediate followers, and from them to others capable of receiving it. They received it at first instinctively, and almost unconsciously; it was only when it had already to some extent taken possession of them that they gradually became conscious of its character and claim. How does this method compare with those we often employ? Are we sufficiently content to go on living the life and letting it work? Do we sufficiently recognise that character

generating character is one thing, talk generating talk, or feeling generating feeling, quite another? Are we sufficiently conscious of the dangers of attempting to build before the foundations are laid: the danger of hypocrisy, on the one hand, of reaction, on the other? Is there not a good deal too much talk of a religious kind, a good deal too little conduct? Could we not profitably curtail our religious exhortations and instructions, and devote the time and energy spent on them to following Christ's footsteps as He passed along the beaten track of human suffering and need?

Finally, Christ's whole attitude was one of health and vigour and manliness; we find in Him no trace of morbidity or sentimentality. Can we say the same of a great deal of our present-day religion? Can we imagine Christ allowing His disciples to join in certain of our most popular hymns? Can we imagine Him encouraging them to use some of our most popular manuals of devotion? Can we imagine Him leading a revivalist service of the Corybantic type, or presiding at a Pleasant Sunday Afternoon? It is vain to plead popularity as an argument on the other side; to say that many people can only receive religion when presented to them in one or other of these ways, and that it is better for them to have some religion

than none at all. Christ not merely disregarded popularity, He expressly warned His disciples to be on their guard against its dangers: to look carefully to themselves if ever they found all men speaking well of them. Christ certainly did not regard some religion as better than none at all. Religion of certain types He plainly considered worse than none at all. The people with whom, as a class, He would have no dealings, were the professed and zealous religionists of His time.

These are the kind of questions which I should like to have carefully considered. I don't say that there is not a sufficient answer to them; I don't say that our accustomed methods of religious propaganda are not capable of satisfactory defence. But I should like to know what that defence is. If, however, it is not forthcoming, if these methods cannot be reconciled to those of Christ and are wholly incongruous with the character of the movement which springs from Him, then it is plain, is it not, that just to the extent to which we use them we are responsible for the slow progress of that movement.

From start to finish—let me repeat it once more—the Christian life is one of duty-doing, of righteousness or right action, if the phrase is preferred. It was only to those who were

trying to do their duty that Christ could reveal Himself. In dealing with others His efforts were directed to awakening their consciousness of moral need. By the influence of a commanding personality, by the example of a life of beneficent activity, by the stimulus of paradox and parable, by the display of miraculous power, He sought to arouse them from the sleep of indifference and worldliness, to make them open their soul ears and eyes, to emerge from dreamland into the world of reality, whose supreme law is obedience to conscience, and whose all-pervading activity is the unselfish service of God and man. Read in this context, it is not untrue to say that a man who, without any conscious religious reference, is soberly and quietly trying to do his duty, to be a good father and husband and citizen and friend, may be much nearer the Kingdom of God than many who, with far more highly developed devotional or ecclesiastical aptitudes, are negligent in the discharge of these responsiblities. Christ Himself tells us plainly that this may be so; that it is possible to acknowledge His Lordship with complete intellectual and emotional sincerity and still be excluded from the Kingdom. The essential qualification for entrance is obedience to His Father's Will, and it is possible that

many who render this obedience may not yet know that it is the Father's Will, or that its full revelation has been made in the Incarnate Son. If they go on willing to do it they are bound sooner or later to attain to this knowledge. But must the attainment in all cases be made during the years of their sojourn here on earth? Is it not a bold assumption to say that this must be so? Is there any sure warrant for it in Christ's own teaching, or in the authorised teaching of the Church?

In the light of these considerations let us look for a moment at the problem with which we are confronted here in England at the present time. We are accustomed to say that indifference to Christianity is due to increasing material prosperity, on the one side; to the increasing pressure of the struggle for existence, on the other. That men's whole attention is being absorbed in the effort to achieve physical well-being or to avoid physical disaster, and that as a result their spiritual sensibilities have become dulled and atrophied. The explanation may be valid up to a certain point, but if what I have said as to the essential character of the Christian life is true, it is by no means exhaustive. For the primary qualification which Christ demands is sensibility to the claims of conscience, and no one can say

that this is dormant in the English race. The average Englishman is by no means insensible to these claims; even when he evades them in his own conduct he shows that he recognises them by his instinctive admiration for those who do not evade them. Any man who seems to be actuated by conscientious motives is treated with extraordinary consideration by English public opinion, even when his conscience is plainly of the crank order. Any man who does his duty consistently along recognised and useful lines is sure of respect, rising to the point of enthusiastic admiration when his life's work is devoted to some great national or social cause. It is not true that the average healthy Englishman is unresponsive to the Christian appeal. He may be unresponsive to the appeals of religious emotionalism, or the arguments of religious intellectualism. But it is not too much to say that he possesses the very qualifications which Christ demanded in His disciples, in a somewhat conspicuous degree. Even when he fails to obey his conscience he recognises that it is the supreme faculty of his nature: even when he disregards the law of duty he acknowledges it to be the ultimate law of his life. The foundations are there; the question for us Christians is whether we are building upon them, or whether our ill-

success is due to the fact that we are to a large extent attempting to build on others, deliberately discarded by Christ as quite unsuitable for His purposes.

One or two things I feel fairly confident about. In the first place, it seems pretty certain that a great Church movement will begin when, and only when, the Christian type of manhood can be recognised by the true men of our age as the best and highest type. When to be a Christian means to be a man who, like the Christ of the Gospels, carries the credentials of leadership with him: no mere devotee of an otherworldly cult, but one who can mix as a man among men, who naturally and spontaneously joys with their joys, and sorrows with their sorrows, whose presence is equally welcomed at their social gatherings and in their times of bereavement and suffering, who can rebuke the proud without pose, and restore self-respect to the fallen without condescension, who is alive to commonplace needs and interests, but who can, when the occasion demands, rise to a great emergency and show his God-given power in his manner of meeting its claims. And when, and only when, the Church can be recognised as the best and truest type of human society, the organised centre from which spring the strongest and most persistent forces which

make for human progress and enlightenment. I am quite sure that such a movement is impossible so long as there is substantial truth in the accusation that the type of manhood produced by religious influences is often less sane and balanced and dependable than the average healthy type; that many of the meaner vices, such as hypersensitiveness and querulousness, such as desire for popularity and prominence, such as narrowness and lack of kindly generosity, are tolerated or even condoned in religious circles: vices which the ordinary healthy man of the world would be contemptuous of. Nor can such a movement begin so long as the Church's corporate activities are less rather than more efficient, less cohesive and disciplined and wisely directed, than those of many forms of secular society. No amount of talking on the part of Churchmen, however eloquent and devout and highly organised, can make up for these deficiencies. Our primary function is to live the life, not to talk the talk. Speech has its place in that life, but it is quite a subordinate and secondary place. When the leaven is beginning to spread, when through the medium of human kindliness and sympathy and self-sacrifice the power that is in us passes into others and begins to work its due effects, when dormant consciences

begin to awake, when soul needs begin to be felt, then speech becomes valuable, though even then it must be regulated by the capacity of its hearers. But speech is not valuable; it may be pernicious, and even disastrous, if it is used as a means of introducing men to deep religious truths before they are ready to receive them: or if, still worse, it is used to stir up sentiments and emotions of a spurious and unhealthy kind, or to satisfy mere intellectual cravings wholly detached from the real needs of the soul.

Live the life and let it work. That seems to me to be the epitome of Christ's main method of propaganda. It cannot but work: it cannot but spread. The law to which it is subject is as necessary and inevitable as that which causes a plant or animal to grow by incorporating with itself suitable materials from the atmosphere and soil: or as that which causes the leaven to produce fermentation through the whole lump of dough in which it is placed. The process may be very gradual; it may at times seem very slow. But it bears with it Christ's imprimatur as the true and normal process. Any line of religious effort, however attractive and well-intentioned, which disregards it or tends to interfere with it, cannot, so far as I can see, escape the charge of being out of accordance with the Will of Him in whose Name it is made.

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